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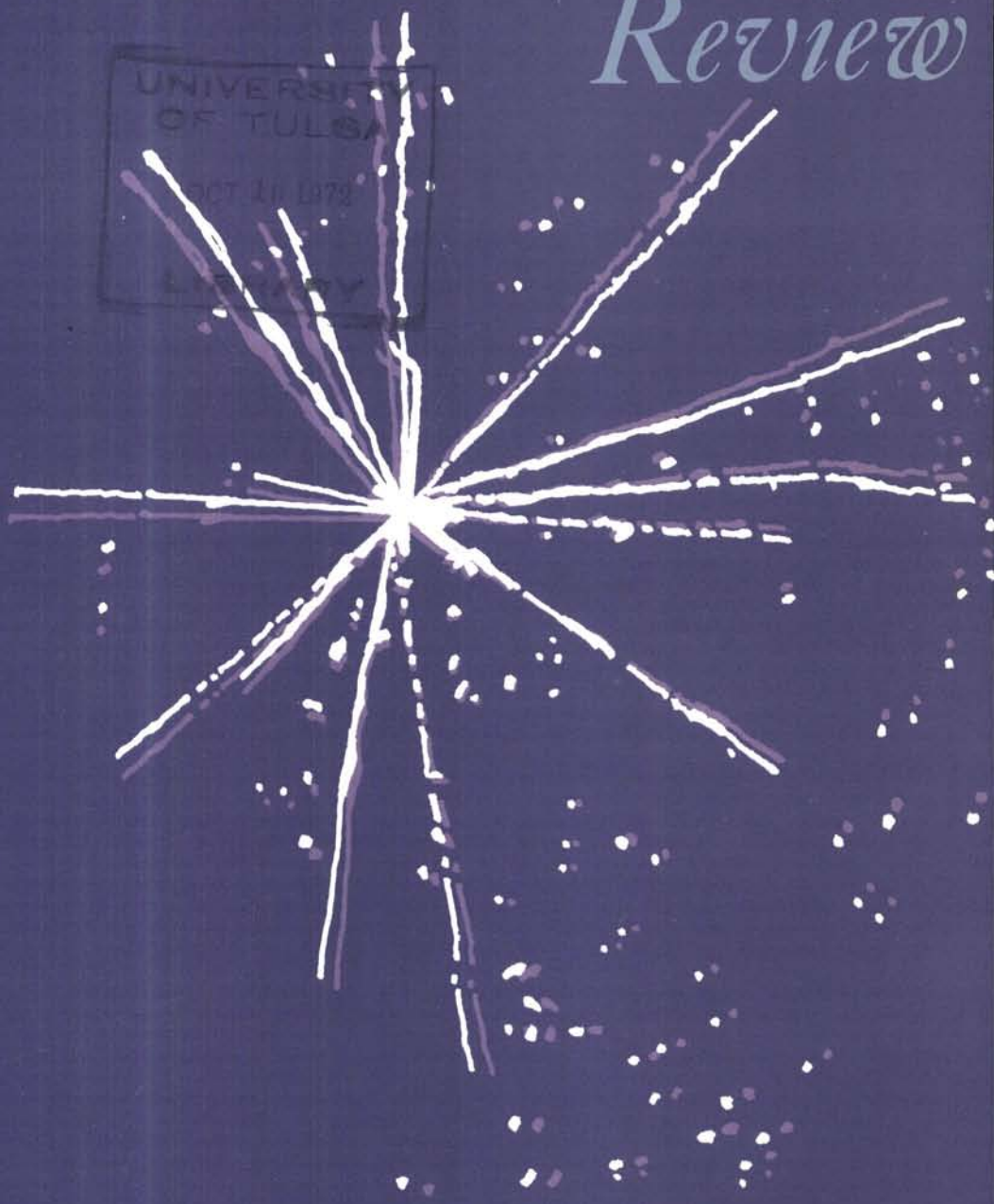

NUCLEAR POWER

The View from Monticello, Minnesota

(See page 34)

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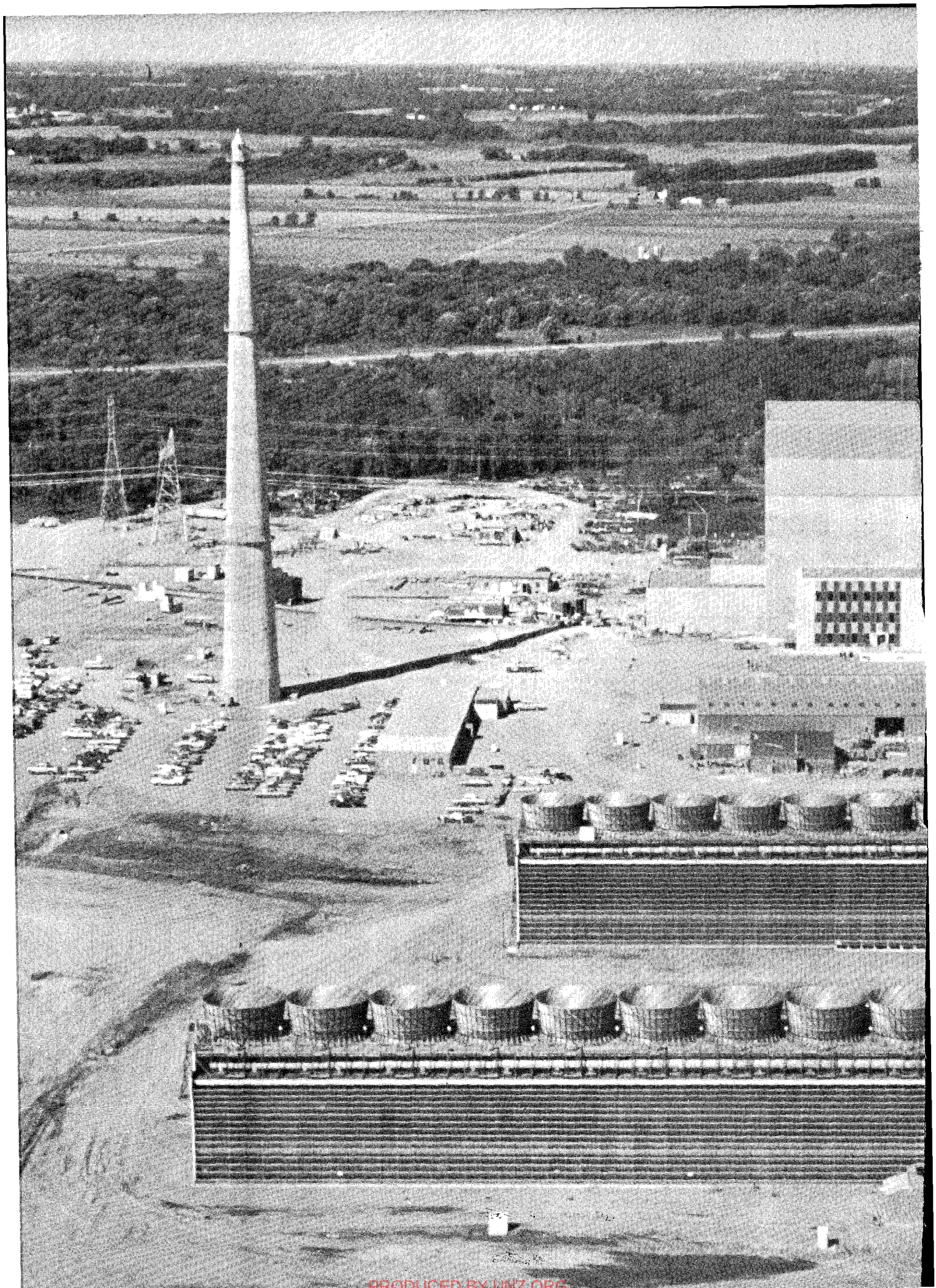

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The North American Review

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Nuclear power is a subject about which much is known and nothing is known—or so Leo Hertzel's article on the Monticello, Minnesota, controversy seems to suggest. The harnessed atom has brought forth sanguine oracles and gloomy Cassandras by the dozens, and both sides wear the indisputable mantle of respectability and earnest sincerity that makes it impossible to tell the heroes from the villains. The result is that for those of us lacking any sort of nuclear expertise, the whole question of good and bad, of safety and risk, seems absolutely beyond us; the arguments become a kind of peculiar folklore, and we are ready to believe anything. Not long ago word got around that the famous Jean Dixon—speaking of oracles—had predicted a major disaster would occur in 1974 at the Palo, Iowa, nuclear plant now being built by Iowa Electric. The story gained such currency that the utility people had to ask Miss Dixon to issue a formal denial—and so she did. Don't worry, Palo. Stay right where you are. Everything is under control.

The future aside, we are struck by the confusion of the present. One day we are on the telephone to Washington, listening to an AEC representative explain, with an occasional chuckle, why it is absolutely impracticable even to think about disposing of nuclear wastes by shooting them into the sun. The next day we read in the morning paper that the AEC Chairman has proposed doing precisely that. One day we read an AEC report pointing out the undesirability of burying radioactive wastes near Lyons, Kansas. Two weeks later, we watch one of the television networks fussing over Lyons, Kansas. Curiouser and curiouser. Our sympathy goes out to all parties in the matter—not the least of them ourselves.

With this number of the NAR we are pleased to inaugurate a new department: Canadian Comment. Written by Peter Morris, the director of the Canadian Film Archives in Ottawa, the column will appear in alternate issues—alternating, that is, with Latin American Report.

George Keithley (whose poem "The Houses in Hell" is on page 57) is the author of *The Donner Party*, a very long poem just published by Braziller. Large sections of the poem appeared last year in *Harper's* and *The Massachusetts Review;* the first excerpts of all were published in the NAR in November of 1968.

A Correction: We offer our embarrassed apologies to George V. Higgins and to his publisher, Alfred A. Knopf. The correct title of Mr. Higgins' new book is *The Friends of Eddie Coyle*, and it is a novel, not a collection of short stories. It's a terrific novel, too; we commend it to you without reservation.

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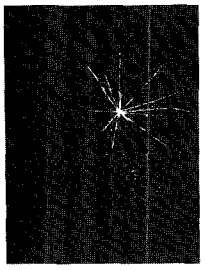

Peter Morris

CANADIAN COMMENT

Declarations of Independence

A curious mood of economic and cultural nationalism holds sway in the power centres of Canada. Almost daily the media warn of "economic imperialism" or announce "Government to Fight U.S. Takeover." A study prepared in 1971 for the Science Council of Canada (a government advisory group) pointed to a new type of "colonial status" brought about by importing technology and painted a gloomy picture of the effects on Canadian economic independence of trends toward world-wide markets. It recommended government action to ensure autonomy for Canadian subsidiaries of multi-national corporations. Another Science Council report warned that Canada is in danger of becoming merely a supplier of raw materials for the U.S. industrial complex. A study prepared by National Revenue Minister Herb Gray was leaked to and published by *Canadian Forum* magazine. Some suggest that the leak was a deliberate government ploy. It caused a furore, largely of approval, because its main recommendation was for government intervention to assure the continuing economic independence of Canadian industries and to prevent takeovers. Last September, Mitchell Sharp, the mild mannered Secretary of State for External Affairs stated that "the Nixon Doctrine has effectively, and perhaps brutally, challenged some of our assumptions and led us to re-examine our position as an industrial trading nation." Two days later the Prime Minister said on television that circumstances may make it necessary "to reassess fundamentally our relation with them (the Americans), trading, political and otherwise." The message is clear: foreign ownership is bad. Never mind that it has been basic policy of successive Canadian governments to encourage investment from abroad in order to develop and maintain an industrialized standard of living.

The public seems to accept the new policies. A recent cross-country poll revealed that a majority (59%) of Canadians were willing to accept a lower standard of living if that were the price of greater independence. A mere 5% (surprisingly, 10% in Quebec) felt that Canada should join the U.S.A., and only 19% were in favour of an economic union. In December, the Committee for an Independent Canada held its first national conference. The discussions were widely reported. The members warned each other, and the rest of Canada through the media, of Canada's impending national suicide. The mood of the debate is perhaps best summarized in the words of former Liberal finance minister, Walter Gordon: "I would not give Canada another 20 years of independence if we do not take strong action almost immediately to reverse the present trends." However, the Committee is essentially made up from a Toronto élite who have perhaps most to gain from a decline in American influence. The West (whose largely non-industrialized economy benefits most from open trade with the USA) is barely represented.

The same split between Westerners and the more nationalistic central Canadians was evident also at the Conservative Party Conference in December. Nationalism dominated the debates, though apart from voting a resolution that would weight university hiring practices in favour of Canadian teachers as against foreigners (i.e., Americans) the conference never really came to grips with the issue. Perhaps the difference between theory and practice is most succinctly expressed in the fact that despite the mood of nationalism, the frames into which the delegates' name cards were inserted were made in the USA.

Debating the existence of a "Canadian identity" is not new; it has taken up reams of paper and can absorb a group of Canadians in the kind of argument that resembles a snake swallowing its own tail. It is an issue that is complicated by economic self-interest (the unending chase to keep up with the U.S. standard of living) and a cultural inferiority complex (why do so many of our best artists and scientists leave Canada?). It has most often expressed itself in a kind of paranoic anti-Americanism that has swept the country in successive waves ever since the American War of Independence. From the Empire Loyalists of the 1770s to the draft resisters of the 1970s Canada has often been a haven for Americans with a grudge against their former home. A few years ago it was revealed that the Canadian Army believed that the main threat to Canada in the 'twenties was from the USA: its principal defence plan was for the protection of the border with the USA.

Americans seem to have a curiously ingenuous way of feeding this paranoia. The recent release of Canadian Cabi-

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net documents from 1940 revealed that the USA then wanted to take over command of the Canadian Armed Forces (a story gleefully headlined by Canadian newspapers). Sometimes they tread indelicately on Canadian toes with schemes in the guise of benevolent continentalism—as in Senator Frank Moss's grand schemes to divert Western Canada's water to southwestern America's advantage, or the celebrated voyages of the oil tanker Manhattan. Deep down, many Canadians have believed and now believe that the USA has designs on their national integrity—if not by armed aggression (as the Colonel Blimps of the Canadian Army would have it in the 'twenties) then in the form of economic aggression. The problem would be simpler—and less agonizing—if Canada had self-assurance and confidence in its own destiny. But, since Confederation in 1867, Canadians have never been quite sure if they actually *did* have a national integrity. And, even if they did, whether they were willing to forego tangible economic benefits in favour of intangible cultural identification.

Many have argued against a meaningful Canadian identity. One of the most persuasive was Goldwin Smith in his *Canada and the Canadian Question* (1891, reprinted by the University of Toronto Press, 1971). Canada, he argued, was an artificial, political creation and, in effect, it was an unnatural creation. The map of Canada had an "absolute want of geographical compactness or even continuity." The Maritimes should trade with New England, Ontario with the Mid-West. Canada's destiny was with America and "there is something to be said in favour of recognizing destiny without delay." Smith's views had a respectable following in his day, and, even now, are persuasive—at least on economic grounds.

But Canada has held together, albeit fragilely, not because of geographical compactness and certainly not because of economic pressures. Social historians have tried to explain the reasons, but they are not convincing. Canadian identity rests not on a single positive rationale (there is no Great Canadian Dream to fire the imagination) but on a collection of minor, often intangible differences. Indeed, it seems definable only in terms of what it is *not*. And negative characteristics are not set to stir the blood and create patriots.

Nonetheless, a new nationalism is evident. Economically, Canadians may feel bound in the web of North American industrial growth and they may argue the merits of encouraging or controlling foreign investment. But in social and cultural terms, they do not want the negative spin-offs of American society. A recent U.S. State Department study of the effects of American trade legislation said: "The political, social and cultural implications of a free trade arrangement are in conflict with Canada's passionate concern to protect its national identity." Canadians passionate about their national identity? Ten years ago the idea would have raised chuckles in intellectual circles. Canadian art, literature, and cinema were then thought to aim for international standards of excellence. If new works did not meet these standards they were casually discarded. Dozens of Canadian artists trying to establish themselves in Canada gave up and made their names elsewhere. Now the mood has changed. Where once artists and critics earnestly searched for greatness, now Canadian cultural activity in its own right is a first goal. As Ottawa poet Frank Sutherland wrote in the new magazine *Northern Journey:* "Much written about Canadian culture is garbage. Yet out of it all a Gogol or a Tolstoy may emerge who superbly synthesises the muddle-headedness into excellence..... Flowers require the compost heap." Or as Robert Fulford put it: "Generations have waited for the geniuses to appear and generations have waited in vain. So go forward without them and hope that they'll turn up along the way. In the meantime, seize this moment, when political nationalism has hit a new peak and audiences are curious, if not eager."

Where once Canadians searched for the Great Canadian Novel among the works of Mazo de la Roche, Ralph Connor, or Mordecai Richler, now publishers pour out Canadian novels, good, bad, and indifferent. Where once theatre groups presenting Canadian plays were few and far between and audience support even sparser, now they present Canadian plays, worthwhile or not. Where once, 60 years ago, a Canadian movie trade paper could argue vigorously against there ever being a need to make feature films in Canada (largely on the basis that Hollywood could do it better), now the Canadian Film Development Corporation pours money into backing a feature film industry. They even back sexploitation films if they are certifiably Canadian. The Canadian Radio and Television Commission has stiffened its rules for Canadian content on television and introduced a 30% Canadian content quota on radio. The Canada Council, which has been supporting Canadian art for some 20 years, has extended the scale of its activities.

This intense, sometimes overwhelming, attempt to encourage and produce Canadian culture, to prepare in Sutherland's term "the compost heap" is actually beginning to produce results. A Canadian pop music industry is emerging that has had some success internationally; writers are emerging and the output of feature films has shot from nil to forty.

And audiences *are* curious. Ten years ago, Canadians stayed away from home-made movies in droves (Don Owen's *Nobody Waved Goodbye* had to gain critical recognition in New York before anyone would go to see it in Canada). Now Don Shebib's *Rip-Off* and Claude Jutra's *Mon Oncle Antoine* not only get a good critical reception but exhibition runs of several weeks in major centres.

It is difficult to foretell the ultimate result. Alan Stang in *American Opinion* magazine claims Canada is on the verge of becoming a Communist country: "As in Cuba, there is a Canadian version of 'Cuba Si, Yankee no'. An attempt is being made to reduce and eliminate American investment. 'Canada for Canadians' the people are being told. The stage is being set for the usual nationalisations." We may scoff at the raising of the old Commie bogey (Trudeau's much reported radicalism is a myth), but there is no doubt that Canadian chauvinism is on the march. □

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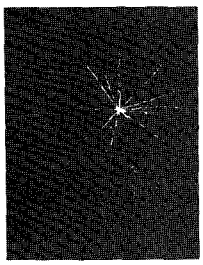

Robert Emmet Long

THEATRE JOURNAL

Olivier in Repertory

—London

There isn't a striking difference between the West End and Broadway. New Yorkers usually feel that the most interesting productions are presented first in London, then come to New York a season or two later. Londoners have the same feeling in reverse, as if the most talked-about shows, particularly musicals, reached the West End two years after successes in New York. The musical *Company* has just opened to enthusiastic reviews in the West End, and Simon Gray's play, *Butley*, directed by Harold Pinter, which has been having a considerable success here, will in due course be reaching Broadway, where it will almost certainly be well received.

But there is one really noticeable difference between the English and American theatres: that is the role played by English Repertory. There is no equivalent in New York. The APA Phoenix Theatre went under two years ago, and the Lincoln Center repertory group has not yet seemed able to make repertory work very well; its productions have been almost consistently disappointing. But repertory flourishes here, and with conspicuous success. The question of why repertory functions well here and not in New York is fascinating, and is explained partly, of course, by economics. Theatre tickets cost only a third as much in London as they do in New York; Equity scales are lower, and so are production costs. Repertory plays do not have to appeal to everyone in London in order to pay their way. But there is another reason, and that is that repertory is a firmly established tradition in London, with many talented actors working exclusively—or nearly so—on the stage. By contrast, New York has no tradition at all of actors who devote their whole careers to stage acting; in fact, many of the best stage actors in New York leave for Hollywood, and cannot be tempted back even to Broadway, much less to a low-budgeted repertory production.

There are a number of major repertory companies here, including the Royal Shakespeare Company, which performs through the year at Stratford, with a sister group in London. But surely one of the most exciting of these groups is the National Theatre, whose director is Sir Laurence Olivier. The National Theatre will have a permanent home in 1973 on the South Bank, where a magnificent building, with a number of stages, is now being completed. In the meantime, the National Theatre uses two London theatres for its productions—the Old Vic, across from Waterloo station, and the New Theatre, off Leicester Square. All of the National Theatre's productions this season have been notable, and Olivier himself has starred in two of them. He plays James Tyrone in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, and Shylock in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.

I awaited the opening of *Long Day's Journey into Night* with particular interest, since I remembered Ralph Richardson's portrayal of the father in the film version with the strongest admiration. It was one of Richardson's great roles, and one which he does with such authority that it is hard to imagine another actor even presuming to approach. Richardson's Tyrone is an old man, a great American actor of his day, presiding over a family in ruins, a family locked in deep, neurotic frustration. He is a big man whose strength is fading into mist and illusion; he is burned out, weary. So the question was, how would Olivier attempt the role, how would he do it differently than Richardson, how would his version compare? The London drama critics called Olivier's performance "massive," but that was the very thing it was not; it was brilliantly impressionistic at times, but it did not have the weight, the depth, or the authority of Richardson's rendering of the same part.

Yet Olivier is one of the great actors of our time, and his interpretation of O'Neill is a pleasure to see; he brings to the part of Tyrone a good deal of imagination and elegance—and surprise. He speaks American English, with a bit of the Old Country brogue ("keep your darty tongue off Ireland," as he rages to his son). He is thick-headed and bullish—the sort of man to whom it is natural to shout when he is angered, as he easily is. And when he is choleric, he grows red in the face—as if his collar were choking him. Olivier's Tyrone is not quite so much a weary elder statesman of the stage as Richardson's; he has retained more of the vigor which propelled him from a fifty-cent-a-week machinist's helper to a lionized matinee idol. This is perhaps a weakness of Olivier's interpretation, for you feel that Tyrone is never really totally crushed by circumstances. Olivier brings to the role certain impish qualities which Richardson never conceived of. His gestures can be quick, and he sometimes talks in a torrent. At one point, he leaps suddenly onto a table to take up a new position while he argues with his son; it is unexpected, and Olivier himself smiles at his deftness, as if, old ham that he is, he still knows how to upstage his sons. At another moment (a great moment it is) Olivier has been listening to his son's reciting of Nietzsche and Swinburne, and retaliates with a few lines from Shakespeare ("our little lives are rounded with a sleep"). The theatre is

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literally hushed, as he almost whispers the lines—slowly, gropingly, perfectly. The effect is stunning, and at that moment we suddenly know that James Tyrone could compel crowds; we believe in the acting talent imputed to him. And when he has finished, the bubble is burst by a peculiar smile of satisfaction spreading over Tyrone's face—a smile indicating that he knows he has executed the lines well and annihilated decadent Swinburne. The audience roars with laughter at this tired, yet still fiery and comical Celt.

This raises perhaps the old question of narcissism in Olivier's acting. Some years ago, I saw him on the Broadway stage as Archie Rice in John Osborne's *The Entertainer.* It was a fascinating performance, but I think what had impressed me most of all was that great Olivier had been able to take off a seedy music hall vaudevillian. You could believe in Olivier as the broken vaudevillian, but you were also conscious of Olivier himself, taking him off and, as it were, throwing dust in the eyes of the audience. The same could be said of Olivier's film version of *Othello.* You were impressed, perhaps most of all, by Olivier's impersonation of an African—the loose-socketed swinging of the arms, the rolling of the eyes, the incipient signs of passion and irrationality which had, until then, been held under restraint. You practically forgot the Moor in your admiration of Olivier's impersonation. It is the same with *Long Day's Journey into Night.* Olivier's voice cracks at times, with rage, with emotions that wound him, but you are apt to marvel at how well he does it. He stammers inarticulately, but when he does, he always does so to perfection. There is a splendid moment in the play when Olivier has a long speech about his childhood—about his father who deserted the family and left them stranded in a foreign land, forcing him to go to work in a machine shop when he was ten years old, and of the mother who was once given a gratuity of a dollar, and brought home groceries, crying: "Thank God, for *once* we'll *all* have enough to eat." Olivier weeps out this line in a broken voice, standing in the center of the stage, with spotlights upon him; and the audience is suspended in the mid-air of make believe—heart-broken, paralyzed. Then the rhythm of the play is resumed, and the drama goes on. For that single moment, you are in the presence of a great artist. A moment later, however, you think: how marvelously Olivier delivered that line!

It is very much a part of Olivier's stage presence that the audience's attention is riveted upon him at all times. Even in the curtain calls, where he appears to efface himself, Olivier upstages everyone else—the whites of his eyes are so large that they can be seen with hypnotic effect at the back of the top balcony, and a strange, ironic smile on his lips puzzles the audience and compels its attention to the one-and-only stage wizard, Olivier. But in fact, the other players are only fair to middling. Constance Cummings, who plays the mother, was warmly received in the British press—partly, one thinks, because she is an elder figure of the English theatre, and partly because the London critics are less candid, or (if you prefer) less fierce, in their reviews than their counterparts in New York. She attempts tragic attitudes which she cannot reach, and speaks in an irritating, whining voice. Despite her mature years, she looks almost startlingly young, and pretty-faced—a doll-woman who has never grown up. Katherine Hepburn, in the film version, brings infinitely greater depth to the role. Hepburn is a real person with an inner life; she is both strong and fragile, and can be—and has been—shattered like delicate crystal. The National Theatre production of *Long Day's Journey into Night* explores some new dimensions of the play, but it lacks the tragic force of the film. In the film, you feel the weight of time and of what time does to men and women, annihilating their little dreams; you feel this especially because both the father and mother, despite their weakness, have a stubborn stature. Richardson's James Tyrone is emotionally deeper than Olivier's, and Hepburn's Mary understands what suffering means.

* * *

Olivier appeared again this season, with his wife, Joan Plowright, in the National Theatre's version of *The Merchant of Venice,* under the production of Jonathan Miller. *The Merchant of Venice* had, in fact, been presented by the National Theatre in 1970; the current showing provides an opportunity to see what was, and is, an unusual rethinking of Shakespeare's comedy. Among other things, Jonathan Miller has given us a *Merchant* in late Victorian settings and costumes, and asked us to see it as one of Shakespeare's "problem" plays. Olivier is well supported by the other actors, particularly by Joan Plowright; she is not the youngest Portia you will ever see, but she has a great deal of ease and assurance in the role, and brings to it the wit of drawing room comedy. She is a mature woman, a woman of the world, rather than Shakespeare's radiant girl. Anthony Nicholls is also interesting as Antonio, the merchant, usually a minor and thankless role. He is dressed in a morning coat and a black silk hat; his face is that of a man of banking interests. He is the sort of man who by his appearance alone would qualify to sit on a board of directors. Bassanio, Portia's young man, is played by Frank Barrie—extraordinarily good-looking and "well turned out," practically the image of the handsome, leisured young Englishman of the period of the Empire. In short, he is not deep. Through these characters, Miller seems to be telling us that the world of *The Merchant of Venice* has its focus in money, trade, and exclusions—based on breeding—which underlie a vision of social order and harmony. Like Victorian England, Venice was also, at the time of Shakespeare's play, a center of wealth and a capital of trade; the play's metaphors are frequently of money and gold.

Enter Shylock, the Jew, usurer and alien. Olivier, as Shylock, wears the same morning coat and top hat as Antonio, but underneath his top hat, significantly, he wears a skull cap. He has a tenseness and irritability the other characters do not. His money lending is necessary at times, as it is at the opening of the play, and the others will make use of him; but there is no mistaking the depth of scorn they feel for him—or the resentment he feels in

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return. Shylock is not usually considered a major role, but Olivier makes it seem so. It is Olivier the audience longs to see onstage for another of his episodes. And he continues to be amazing in his portrayals of ethnic types–here a Jew of a pronounced type. His speech is quick, with recognizable traces of an accent; he even raises his upper lip to show more of his teeth, which, with the whole set of his face, and the *pince-nez* spectacles he sometimes wears, gives the impression that Olivier may have studied some Jewish tailor in the unfashionable East End. But it is at the end that Olivier reveals how much he is more than a mere mimic. The Duke of Venice declares his money, his goods, and his property forfeit to the state, *and* he decrees that Shylock must convert to Christianity. Shylock is literally pinioned against a wall as the court asks if he is satisfied with its decision. Olivier is not a tall man, but he usually conveys a sense of height by some trick of his presence. At this moment, however, he becomes a small man, almost the size of a terrified rat driven into a corner. His face goes red, and his eyes blaze with tears of fear and horror and impotent helplessness; we realize suddenly what Olivier has been implying all along–that Shylock, beneath his aggressive manner, is a victim of fright, the paralyzing fear of a despised cultural alien. Shylock chokes out in three quick, hideous gasps, "I am satisfied." Then he staggers down a staircase where, off stage, Olivier is heard in a sobbing scream of pain, like the sound of a dumb, eviscerated animal. The effect is blood curdling. Probably no other actor could convey Shylock's pain, and the gruesomeness of his fate, as Olivier has done. It is a moment you cannot erase from your mind, like some terrible crime you witnessed in the street and could never forget.

The Merchant of Venice closes in harmony, its conflicts resolved, and its characters united with their rightful partners. Miller even introduces the sweetest and most soothing music to accompany this sense of a world become golden. There is only one odd, discordant note–the wailing music of the Kaddish, in remembrance of ancestors and the dead, the Shylock motif. Jonathan Miller's interpretation of *The Merchant of Venice* may not be definitive, but it is certainly original in a way that does not distract from Shakespeare's play but searches deeper into it. The production is elegantly thought out and staged, a model of the polished ensemble acting which is Miller's trademark and signature. And it is in the imaginativeness of Miller and Olivier that we see why the National Theatre is performing today as a first-rate repertory company, with a scope and quality America might well envy. □

HELEN SORRELLS

AFTER-GRASS

The grass that grows after the first crop has been mown.

Nights descended like a tent
over the house. She sewed. He read.
Endless, they seemed to her, he bent
on using them with nothing said.

Each looked for changes in the other:
He, to see her own the land
as he did; she, to have him speak
with words, as well became a man.

They worked and waited out the seasons.
Wary as hares, they trained the hounds,
tended the garden, cut alfalfa,
bed their only meeting ground.

Land and years will have their toll:
Hunger became a double yoke.
Both to the breaking point were starved.
They touched with hands, with earth. He spoke.

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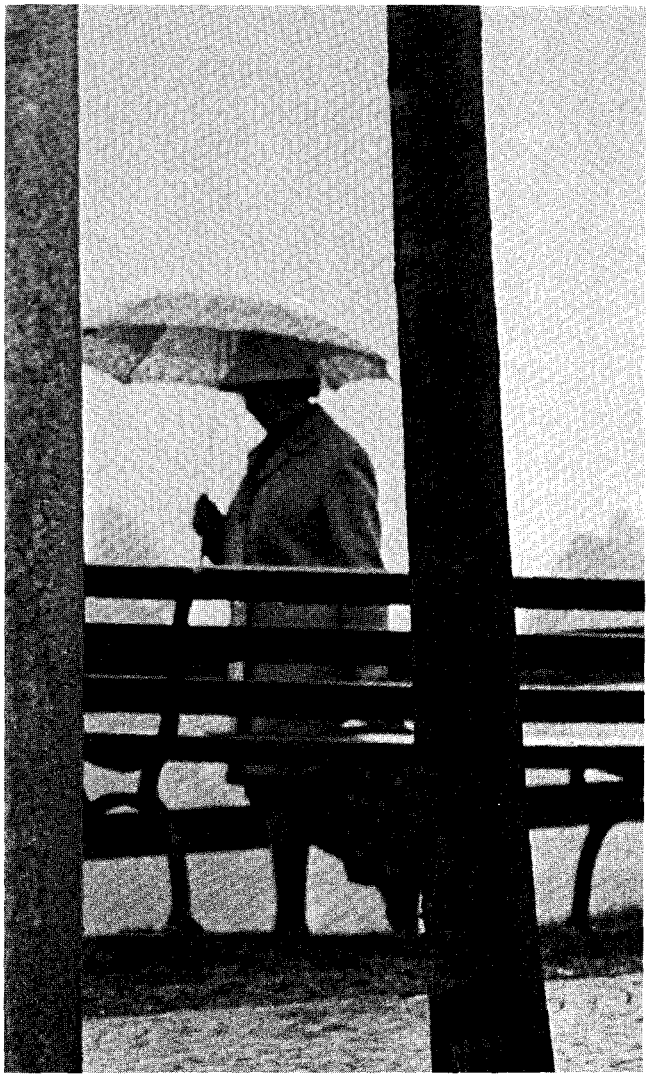

A Novella by Carol Hebald

CLARA KLEINSCHMIDT

CHAPTER ONE

To Professor Arthur Zeiger

I have endured in my life profound insults and lapsed from them into profound indolence. During dinner with an acquaintance one evening, I confessed that I often felt quite alone. She exclaimed, "But we are *all* alone—you are not,

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you know, *sui generis*." Though you may not understand me, I felt this a profound insult.

I am an elderly spinster, wrinkled and poor—an ant, a spider, if you like. I occupy a top floor walk-up on Manhattan's lower East Side. My name is Clara. Do not expect that I will kill myself at the end of this narrative—I am neither ill, hungry, nor wretched. Indeed I find so much amusement in day-to-day—you must excuse me. That is not quite true. May I confess something? I am a terrible liar. I lie without even noticing it myself, so that people believe I am telling the truth. I want to appear cleverer than I am in order not to appear more stupid than others. I am not different from others, but more like them than they themselves, in feeling, in intensity. Yet I seem peculiar. In the past I thought I could achieve common grounds with people if I laughed often in their presence and ate heartily in their homes. But I learned later that they only ostracized me for my foolishness and gluttony. As time went on, I became, by my own will, quite alone.

As a Jew, I know neither God the Father, nor God the Spirit, but I have what you might call a heart-knowledge of Christ. I am a retired Latin teacher. I feel afraid suddenly. Please speak. Always I have been afraid—so large—my fear was very large—

My students expected of me help, advice, I who was so helpless before the exigencies of life. In youth, we are obsessed, are we not, by "pain"—so that it becomes almost fashionable to declare ourselves unhappy. And we are! Oh yes—unhappy! I had a student, a perfectly ugly boy with a cataract in his left eye. I was somehow very moved by him and went out of my way to be kind. One afternoon, during a conference, he said: "I love you, Miss Kleinschmidt." At that instant I noticed egg-droppings on his tie; I became physically ill. I,—please, I say what I say to clarify myself (hm!). Understand it but do not refer to it—I ask you not to refer to it—

Excuse me—just now I am unable to control the stream of my thoughts. I am imagining myself a young woman, full-bodied and very beautiful. My husband is entering the front door; I rise from my work to greet him. I have spent the day scouring my home and preparing a tasty chicken dish for supper. My husband smiles and holds out his arms to embrace me,—he is touching my face, my hair,—and our child asleep in his play-pen. I am twenty-five years old and in deep love.

At twenty-five, I played small roles in the Yiddish theater. In the beginning all went well. I was a gifted comedian and consistently employed for several years. I am not ashamed to say that Thomashefsky pinched my bottom more than once during a performance—and who could blame him? Though not very commercial looking (I come from a long line of Mona Lisas), I was a zoftik morsel and really quite sweet. However, during my career, I was occasionally overcome by a certain despondence that grew acute during performances. At these times I acted mechanically, and sometimes, while playing, planned to kill myself later in the evening. My depression was barely noticed by my colleagues, though Adler sometimes complained that my energy level was low. My despondence grew more frequent and marked. At odd intervals I grew acutely depressed and barely managed the daily necessities. I remember at the time attending funerals to which I was not invited. I peeped cautiously at the faces of the dead. Some were tender and lovely, but as a whole, they were disagreeable. Their smiles—I do not like them—why do the dead grow so heavy in their coffins? I left the theater abruptly after seven years and began living on a modest inheritance my father had left me.

Quite suddenly at twenty-nine, I developed a passion for my exterminator. He was a middle-aged man, thorough in his work, and extraordinarily kind. How he absorbed me in spite of myself! Always the sound of his footstep had the power of quickening my pulse. Never did he spray my apartment without making in me large results of gratitude. But I never could confess myself. I felt afraid of being insulted.

One afternoon I found the courage to invite him to tea. But out of nervousness I served him without a spoon.

"With what should I stir the tea," he asked, "with my shmuck?"

I am lying just now in order to fascinate you. I will not do it again.

Lately I am afraid to move without giving all my attention to it because if I am doing something else, I might carry out the wrong movement. For instance, in going out that door, if I paid attention to something else, I might stand on my head. I do not want to move, because if I do, everything changes around me and upsets me horribly, so I remain still to hold on to a sense of permanence. Sometimes I can remember about love—

The human light unshunnable. I must speak of it—I don't know how. The world outside's asleep. Dark outside my window—cold. My neighbors, the Swensons and Murphys, have put their families to bed. The boys who play about my stoop have all gone home now. I sit at my desk—pen, paper, and tea—and feel weary. You might say I feel weary without ever having lived. No, not that exactly. I have loved. One man spoke of children, kissed my eyes. My longing for a child was so great that it amounted to a physical ache in my breasts.

Being a virgin, I am very unhappy. Ablative absolute construction. Will you marry me? Oh how awkward this is,—you must excuse me. It was necessary for me just then to shock you in order to avoid disaster. Do you see my meaning? Last night I found a worm in my porkchop and forced myself to eat it just in order to avoid this nameless disaster. Oh I know it is all nonsense, these superstitions, but it costs one so little to give in to them. Comparatively, I mean. Well, suppose disaster *did* come, and just because I was too reticent or lazy to avoid it?

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I meant to speak of love—I had begun to speak of love—

These superstitions are self-punitive—I admit. The fact is I crave punishment everywhere and in everything. I seem never to avoid it. I steal deliberately from super-markets fully conscious that I wish to be caught and punished. I absolutely *want* to commit something wicked,—yet, it seems, not by my own will, but by someone else's. I grow depressed after full meals. My dreams have begun to accuse me. Often I am swallowed up by an enormous, glittering wave, or shot in the breast by a stranger. I cease even to enjoy my reveries. Always when I feel the least bit content in them, I imagine a rat leaping up to my eyes. Fundamentally, I suppose, I crave punishment even in pleasure—otherwise it is incomplete. Perhaps I've a thirst for martyrdom, do you think?

Now then. Suppose you met me one evening at a gathering, I think you would find me of pensionable age, standing approximately five feet four inches tall, slight and tidy of build, and with a healthy crop of brown and silver hair fluffed out in a feather cut. You would judge my face more round than oval, and displaying a set of deep black eyes, and a full and amiable mouth, which, upon further acquaintance, would probably tell you that though I have grimaced and wept enough in my time to deserve the frown lines on my forehead, and the grooved furrows about my lips, I have neither laughed enough to deserve the crow's feet about my eyes, nor suckled those babes who might have justified the withered flutings on what was once a superb bosom.

If, at any rate, at our supposed gathering, we in any way delighted one another, I should probably invite you next day for afternoon tea. And when you had climbed up my five flights of wooden stairs, and puffingly entered my hall, I should urge you to catch your breath in my elegant, mahogany chair table which consists of a drawer for gloves and mufflers, a seat for resting and slipping on rubbers, and a spacious table top which pulls down over the seat and inside which rest my boxes of *maison de blanc* handkerchiefs with which I enjoy blowing my nose. As you rose and passed into my living room, you would be greeted beside its archway by a graceful, hand-forged iron bracket which holds my pottery pot for growing ivy and other drooping vines. And in the far corner opposite the tan studio couch on which I sleep, you would note my richly carved mahogany table, and over to the left, my graceful chair of Sheraton influence upholstered in colorful, crewel embroidery and in which I delight in reading.

You might then glance through those books which line the entire wall above my desk of antique English, a maple reproduction from the Chippendale period (about 1775), and which displays the following: A smiling little pencil man—that is, a man whose anatomy consists of two pencils, a pen, ruler, eraser, paper clips, pen wiper, pen points, and elastics. (He came to me post-paid from Widdicombs in 1934 and has ever served me most genially.) Next him you'd spy a cigarette box of especially fine Japanese red lacquer with a genuine carved white inlay; and to its right, a dainty, hand-painted lamp with a red porcelain base. Enough! Let us get better acquainted.

CHAPTER TWO

Professor Gootman is a memory deep in my mind and therefore a pardonable subject for contemplation. He taught me Latin at the City University in which I enrolled shortly after I had left home. I was twenty at the time and eager to expand my knowledge of the classics.

Yet I seemed never to concentrate on Gootman's lectures. It is a fact, you know, that I seldom listen to people. I am generally so grateful for their presence that I neglect to make sense of their words. It is then I notice their special physical characteristics. Gootman's head, for example, resembled a luminous nut. His nose displayed a wart from out which grew a tuft of hair, white as his daisy-white beard. He was otherwise, except for a pus-yellow hearing aid, quite ordinary, fat, and personable. During lectures he romped like a puppy and was ever prompt, when he could hear them, to arbitrate disputes. A kinder man I've never known,—so softspoken and gentle it seemed he positively breathed forth light. However it was not light but rather mucus that emanated from his nostrils when he wept, or more accurately, drooled over Catullus.

I confess I loved a man who drooled. He never knew it but I think he guessed. When I was out of spirits, I feared his loss; cheerful, I had precisely the same dread: say, what does that prove?

The Easter of my junior year I went to St. Patrick's Cathedral (merely to rest, mind you—I am not pious) and heard behind me the sounds of someone gently passing wind. During hymns it grew more snortish and distinct—unwittingly I turned around. To my amazement I discovered Gootman lustily blowing his nose. I grew cannibalistic, sexual beyond dreams. From sheer excitement I sang off-key. I waited impatiently to invite him home to discuss—what? The world, my progress, life, his nose! Finally at the end of service I rose and intercepted him:

"Professor Gootman?" He had not yet seen me. "Professor Gootman?"

"Why Clara! How nice to see you here!"

"*Tempus fugit*," I said: "By a word you bind me to you hand and foot."

"I beg pardon?" He adjusted his hearing aid.

"If you take me home, I will cook you my goose," I shouted, "give you a piece of fruit."

"What's that?" His eyes began to tear. "I beg—excuse me—I am having difficulty accomplishing a sneeze. Ah—ah—ACH—"

Softly: "I adore you."

"CHEW! Oh dear—I am in a great hurry. A pleasant Sunday." And he tipped his hat.

The unreality of it! I walked the streets for hours afterward. I had to hurry—the crowds. The clear morning drifted into an obscure afternoon. My mind followed suit with half-formed thoughts and feelings. I will not dispute that constant observations of one's own feelings is distressing—but I nonetheless indulged myself. I had not such an adventure in all my twenty years as I had in the last twenty minutes. And this, when I got home, I rendered into price-

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less poetical scribblings which I have determined to spare the reader.

But later, in the quiet of my little room, I concocted a plan based on my profound psychological insights: Gootman could not hear my avowal of love for the following reasons: as a child he worshipped his domineering mother which resulted in his later ambivalence toward women—the initial cause of his deafness. That he was deaf also to men stemmed from guilt over the castration-wish toward his father with whom he was in deep conflict. So be it, thought I. Ambivalence is the human condition and since the human condition is holy, so too is ambivalence. Point one: He needed to be approached with greater subtlety—I planned to engage first his interests and sympathies. Point two: I was a superb scholar: ergo, all I need do is fail next Tuesday's midterm. Bravo! He would confer with me in his office. I'd express to him the depth of my feelings, my profound loneliness,—softly, with dignity. He would smile and read me Catullus. We would weep. Oh it would go well, spendidly! Thus decided, I marched into the park, gathered some leaves, munched birchbuds, and otherwise noted the advent of spring.

The day of the midterm arrived. Exquisitely arrayed in my georgette and lace with the new tiered effect, I took my seat and awaited Gootman's arrival. The class, of course, muttered nervously, verbs and declensions. Several asked me questions which I answered with ease and composure. Gootman arrived and silently distributed our exams.

"Begin," he shouted, and smiled warmly at us.

The class wrote hurriedly, intently. I watched them for a moment, and then glanced at the exam. It was a simple test—one I might have breezed through painlessly if I so desired. As it was, I doodled houses, cribs, and playpens. At the bottom I wrote in tiny script: "I am greedy for you; think of nothing but me," and with one neat line scratched it out. This would impress upon him that 1) I worshipped him; 2) I was modest and shy, unlike his mother.

As the bell rang, I rose to turn in my test.

Let me here interject, lest my passion seem "superficial," or my behavior conniving, that my feelings for Gootman were both profound and adoring. I mentioned before a quality about him something like light. I can explain it in no other way,—he was utterly beautiful both in manner and spirit.

My anxiety over the following days took a curious turn. I thought it unlucky to dwell too long on Gootman's probable responses to my exam. (I was superstitious even then). I prepared my homework in other courses with uncommon diligence. I was reading *The Scarlet Letter* at the time and compared myself, through Gootman's eyes, favorably with Hester Prynne. I walked when I could have ridden, ate less than I desired, exercised strenuously—in short, did penance in order to insure my future victory over Gootman.

Our exams were returned to us the following Thursday. Mine contained a huge and lovely "F" above which was scrawled in large script: "Please see me in my office after class."

Straightening my new rose chiffon with the self-belt at the hips, I knocked on Gootman's door.

"Come in," he barked. "Oh hello, Clara—sit down. I'll be with you in a minute." He was twisting the tuft of hair on his nose—apparently in deep thought. After a moment he stopped and stared at me with his large, soft eyes:

"Clara, I was shocked and dismayed by your exam." There was horse shit on his shoes. "Were you perhaps ill?"

"No, quite well, thank you."

"Speak up."

Louder: "I was neither ill nor frightened, Professor Gootman."

"Then I simply do not understand. You made no attempt. You. . ." I interrupted him:

"Professor Gootman?"

"Yes?"

"Others chew with their mouths open, cry with their pain open—how deep does it go?"

"I beg pardon?"

"How deep?" I shouted.

"How deep what?"

"The pain."

"Ah," he replied, "one never knows. What a pity that nothing can be positively ascertained. O *sancta simplicitas,* as the dull fool says wisely. Why do you ask?"

"Misery to me has always seemed beyond the realm of the expressible."

"Ah, 'tears, idle tears,' he quoted, 'tears from the depths—"

"I am unutterably fatigued with the business of living," I screeched. "Oh the motto: to live by all means, to participate in the harmony of the whole. For what have *I* to live? To derive delight? Certainly, if I were a flower or a kitten."

"I understand from what you say that you are not enjoying yourself," he observed.

"Last week I sat in the middle of a crowded street and screamed," I lied. "People took no notice; they passed on."

"Is this true, Clara?"

"No. Yes—Oh it must be something grand to be able to look at life the way you do."

"I?" He farted or blew his nose—I forget which.

"Your sensitivity, your perceptions are," I continued, "succulent to the mind. I envy you them. I envy all gifted and fortunate people. Once I looked up Keats' handwriting and adopted it as my own. . ."

"So," he mused, "Shakespeare chose in the sonnets to envy 'this man's art and that man's scope.' But you are young, Clara, you should be happy!"

"I am happy only when I am not distinctly aware of being wretched. I suffer real and imagined insults."

"Can you elaborate on that?"

"Ha! you mustn't ask me that!"

"Then permit me to distract you." He rose from his chair.

I had won. My heart was pounding. I looked directly at him and whispered softly,

"How?"

"I shall ignore your "F" and examine you orally." He began to drool, and I, head averted, to weep.

"Begin by declining *laude*," he ordered.

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"*Laude, laudas, laudat, laudimus, laud. . .*"
"Yes? Why do you hesitate?"
"I should like to kiss you *laude* on the cheek!"
I swept out the door and took an "A" in the course.

CHAPTER THREE

A spanking is a love-pat. A naughty child is not a hated child. The hand strikes because it wants to teach, not because it wants to kill. You must love me if you take the trouble to care where you hurt me.

Downtown, in lower Manhattan, where I came from, you got lickings. Only uptown they gave out spankings—or so my Aunt Bertha said. You see, she raised me after my parents died. Joint owners of a small jewelry store, they were shot by the Mafia when I was six. I really did not wish to speak of that.

Aunt Bertha was a fattish widow of middle age who ate bananas and sour cream for lunch. "Bad Clara, bad," she'd say—the sour cream lathering her fat pink lips and tongue like toothpaste. She licked me a lot. You see, reading and dreaming were my passions and because I found it hard to attend to anything less interesting than their transports, I was hard to teach, hard to subdue, and hard to befriend. How's that for a bit of reportage? No, I made no friends whatsoever.

Instead I used to sneak out of the house and take rides on buses. They made me feel as though I were going somewhere. On the morning of my ninth birthday, for instance, I rode by myself to Grace Church in Greenwich Village and proceeded on its steps to disrobe myself entirely and—hey-diddle-diddle—got carted home by a policeman.

"Bad Clara, bad," Aunt Bertha said—and pushed me into a closet filled with some old clothes that my mother had neglected to discard. And I spoke and played with them and pretended: "Now if this sleeve were papa's hand, that dress of silk is mama's breast, this coat of fur, my papa's chest"—so just on dreams my days were planned.

That Saturday at Synagogue I asked Aunt Bertha, "Do you think if we prayed very hard, God would bring back mama and papa?" And reader! That stumper was not intended to make Aunt Bertha embrace me so fiercely (she loved so fitfully, punished so harshly), was not intended to move those pious ladies about us to such sighs, lamentations—but it did—and for a moment, my dreams became real. . . .

At eleven, I only glimpsed reality—I got the remainder from books. One afternoon I came upon a volume which included biographies of distinguished actors and actresses from the past. I studied them carefully and, do you know, actually made these actors my family. Not in the trivial sense of prying into their habits and eccentricities (I had no desire to be persnickety—I dislike niggling), but I found with them an affinity based on our deepest likenesses. I loved Duse for her shyness, Kean for his brilliance, and Bernhardt for her passion. I vowed that I too would one day be an actress of exceptional excellence. Aunt Bertha did not think the idea such a much, but I pressed it upon her with such vehemence that she finally consented to my request for drama lessons.

I have no intention of describing the ins and outs of my theatrical training nor, after I graduated from college, my apprenticeship into the Yiddish theater except to say I somewhat resented the formal precepts of "method acting," because I worked intuitively according to those precepts and so, in a sense, invented them on my own. However that may be, my rump was broad, my breasts were round and high, and I received for my talents the exquisite rewards of love and approval.

Heinrich Schlosser, with whom I studied, once defined the actor's talent in direct ratio to his *unconscious* need for love and approval. This seems to me eminently accurate because in the face of such a need, one knows inevitably the way to move people. I, for example, looked upon myself as the instrument on which I played, an instrument lush in resonance, rich in range. Thus while acting, I, in a sense, pretended to be what I was, which is to say, I created characters out of minor adjustments of my will. Did not those comedic characters I portrayed demand I will my real feelings to a certain degree of "honest exaggeration," the nature of which was determined by those characters in question?

Enough of this! I do not wish to make a thesis, but merely to repeat that my chief commodity, and therefore, success as an actress derived from my longing. So in a sense I created what I sought. It occurs to me that I am indulging a tendency to introspection in my thoughts which, if I may say so, I think I should eschew.

I did a good deal of wandering during the course of my career, though, I hasten to add, not aimlessly. I have never, to say the truth, wandered aimlessly, but rather with a precise object of which I was unaware. One summer Sunday, for example, in my twenty-seventh year, I found myself flirting with little babies during a habitual "wandering" through Central Park. Smartly decked out in my printed chiffon with the flounce placed low, yet I wished at the time to grow old quickly. The shame, the shame of yearning for those young ones to tug at my breasts,—how I longed to stroke their little bodies. Oh the arrogance of little ones! How they cry, announcing their healthy chests. How they crave life! Fidget with their tiny hands and legs expecting the breast as though they were entitled to it.

I was sobbing like a turtle in the grass when the gentleman, Abel Mintz, approached me.

Abel was not a poet but looked like one. A scabious fellow with a hollow look and somber stare, he seemed to exist in a world permanently enigmatical. Indeed so busy was he discovering what he was, he seemed totally ignorant who he was: Abel at thirty-two had been a Rodeo rider, a salmon salesman, and a Fuller Brush man. Brave in action, yet cowardly in demeanor, sparse in intelligence, yet grandiloquent in expression (you should not question me in this flight), he possessed a sort of negative elegance quite out of keeping with his distaste for the nicer rules of etiquette. Upon addressing me for the first time, he declared:

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"When I look at you, I lose my appetite."

"How's that?" I blubbered.

"Such woe is obscenely. Was it not insensitive for me to inquire why you weep among the leaves, whether in fact you are too sick with solitude for me to console you, I should do jes' dat—"

"I beg your pardon, sir—"

"But I assure you I am a very paragon of virtue."

"You are indeed kind," I allowed, "not to press me."

"Depress you? Never. It would have a bad defect. Call me Abel who in the absence or presence of earthquake or cataclysm will protect you home at whose house you may or may not as you see fit divulge the cause of your despondence." He tipped his merton.

We began walking and were at the point of crossing the street when Abel let go my arm with a sudden jerk, made a dash for the other side, and left me standing.

"D'ya have a fella?" he yelled.

"Why do you ask?"

"I was wundrin' if there was a place for me."

Oh hearty he was in rudeness as in love!

Do not think me unmannerly for having spoken so plain of Abel. I did not mean to raise Cain, but merely to describe my beau with a certain degree of accuracy in order to enjoy my Thanksgiving properly.

CHAPTER FOUR

Heaven is perceived in terms of earth, marriage in terms of courtship. Just how apposite these are I leave to your discretion. As well, you may judge for yourself and decide as you judge whether Abel and I were truly mated or whether I deserve a kick in the slats for deciding otherwise. But of this be certain: in the beginning I was as happy as Eve before the Fall, loping and romping with my love, who, if I may become rhapsodic about him, seemed as Adamic a perfection as Abel's original father, though in reality he fell far short. I believe his greatest shame was, years before, his failure to pass the entrance examination to City College. At the time I knew him, he delivered groceries in the mornings, and spent his afternoons in the library where he would borrow lines and phrases from the great poets of the past for use in his everyday discourse. . . . Abel had the eyes of a dreamer living in a crazy maze of plans, hopes, reveries. At times his thoughts would be full of valorous deeds, imaginary achievements: dreams of his own indomitable pluck. I saw all this in his eyes. . . .

How wonderfully elusive are the sources of the human mind's energies. I loved, and was learning to see! It still went badly. I had to make more of my time. But the degree of self-reliance and independence I approached! No more the mousy young actress who shined only onstage. I was as peppy off-stage as on, and glad, yes, to extreme pleasure. I insist upon that. And he, a lad of fire, loved me so hotly, he poured himself out in a very Niagara of protestations: "You are rather like a dream than an insurance,—a goddess, a nymph divine—all teeth and no ears. To what shall I compare your cheeks? Apples are ruddy. I cannot superpraise your parts! your eyes, lips, breasts, incite me to tub-thumping, as you sit there cool, unflappable—Speak! I command you to speak! Dis quiet is agitatin'. Oh I am gorgonized!"

"Till now," I whispered, "I alone knew that I was lovely, but I could convince no one else."

"And me—my passions was unsung."

"Oh Abel! To be happy in happiness when one knows tomorrow it will perish. . ."

And so it went. Concerning Abel's intelligence, I repeat, there is little chance of being prolix. But despite this, I was unable to resist the depth of his ardor, his uncured rapture. Yet coward that I was, I dithered when Abel demanded to witness the Yiddish theater's opening performance of "Moishe's Marbles" that season.

"*Must* you come, Abel?"

"Of course."

"But you don't understand the language."

"Nevadaless."

As it happened, I was cast in the role of Molly, a frivolous young maid who is seduced by her master in the second act. Now Abel, who had never witnessed a live performance before, was so enthralled by the prospect, that he urged me to seat him front row center with the critics. Could I do otherwise than consent?

Backstage on the evening of the performance, I was all a-twitter, trembling lest Abel later request introductions to my colleagues. But I need not trouble you with the vaticinations of my imagination except to say that truly they were unworthy of me, and based on fears wholly unfounded.

For no sooner did the second act curtain rise, and my master grab and kiss me, than we were interrupted by a thunderclap from the audience:

"Dat's my girl," it roared. "Huh latent charms, inscruable virtue infected yours truly previous o' dat slimy slob. . ."

The curtain rung down immediately, and Abel, ushered out rudely by the manager.

Must I tell you the depth of my shame, my heartfelt

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misery? Spare me. For backstage, Adler, Picon, the stage manager, quizzed me brutally: "Who *is* he?" "Do you know him?" "Will he come back?" But I, perjurer, denied all knowledge of the intruder.

The curtain reopened after a respectable pause and the play peaceably continued.

Immediately after the performance I rushed directly to Abel's house. The city was full of portentous luster that evening, but I noticed none of it. I had to settle once and for all—what? Fearing to lose my professional status, logic told me to break it off with Abel. But to deny thus that I loved him would have been to deny the evidence of my senses in order to justify that logic. Our attraction was due to some responsiveness between us of an exceptional sort—but was it indeed love? Or rather that commingling of love and hate on which I had been nurtured, and of which I was but half aware? My thoughts grew vague, elusive. Some boys jostled me on Delancey Street; I excused myself and moved more briskly. Yes, I hated Abel occasionally for his grossness, but for other things beside. Did I recognize in him something of myself I could not bear? In his actions, in his looks, could be detected a soft spot, a place of decay. But other than that? Impossible to discern. And since I was not in the habit of young men pursuing me—logic be damned! which for one unaccustomed to its vagaries, seemed strange enough to vanish from my consciousness like the tail of a rat. I could not break it off, but chastise him I must.

Abel lived in an old-fashioned dwelling on Rivington Street. The room he occupied was heated by a little Franklin stove, and lighted by a small window in the roof. It thus being evening, we would have our confrontation by candlelight. I rushed up the stairs and knocked on the door.

Patience, which used to be a virtue, was not one of my strongpoints. Immediately he appeared, I fell into his arms.

"I cuhn't control myself," he sobbed. "I was so jealous—so jealous o' dat pig—"

"Oh please—try to understand—in the play I had to act a shameless hussy—"

"Nevadaless," he chided, "you could o' been more lotus-eatin' and vegetative."

"But Abel! That would have destroyed my character—don't you understand?"

"No," he said. "A swain in love lacks the acumen."

"Sit down," I commanded. He did so and began munching an apricot.

"Now listen and listen carefully," I began: "An actor is like a butcher: he rolls up his sleeves and he works."

"Then why cuhn't you play a butcher?"

"I don't *look* like a butcher."

"Sure you do. Jes' squash up dem teats!"

"Be quiet," I shrieked. "Tonight was something in the ordinary course of events, terrifying but inevitable for you—Abel, to play characters is my job; I do it to make money. Is that clear?"

"Yeah," he admitted, "udderwise you cuhn't support me."

"That's right! And the nature of my work demands—"

"I'm fully willin' to accept the responsibilities o' your employment," he interrupted, "which brings me to a point o' great impotence. Appricock?"

The point, of course, was marriage. No, I was not astonished by his proposal (I am unused to mundane lies)—but so heartily disturbed by it that a vivification of that reality seems now too much and too painful for me to record. I begged Abel for time and left his apartment fully conscious that my restraint had its roots in indecision and proceeded from a confused mind. An acceptance, on the other hand, would have proceeded from my whole self, my imaginative mind, and had to be good, for whatever is negative is restraint and not action. And action stems from life, restraint from a paucity of life, the absence of the exuberance of mind delighting in itself. I do not live a life of ideas after dinner, but these thoughts intruded themselves upon my consciousness.

I arrived home exhausted, undressed myself, and fell into a fitful sleep. I dreamed myself, in men's clothing, bringing home the matza to a host of malapropos children. One of them, somewhat beshit, awaited me at the door.

"Mama's fluckin' the chickens."

"Lead the way and I'll precede," I boomed.

I discovered Abel, my adoring wife, smothered in chicken feathers.

"Lie down dear," she beamed, "I'll be with you in a moment."

Immediately I obeyed, she gently turned me over, slit open my pants, and proceeded one by one, to insert her feathers up my rectum. I awoke moaning.

I lay late abed that morning listening to the rain. It was not until eleven when my sphincters, tickled by spectral feathers, demanded attention. I rose to face the day. Soon past one I tried to attend to some overdue correspondence, but could not think of Abel less than incessantly. I began to compose a letter to him, intending not to mail it, but rather to ease the turmoil within me. I wrote:

Dear Abel:
You once told me I lived in a world of my own. Perhaps what you really meant was that I should probably be uncomfortable in your world and unknowingly dismissed me from it. It therefore follows that—

Dear Abel:
Nothing follows.

Dear Abel:
Only in such pious breasts as yours must true passion still dwell. You have sought to be non-seeking in a world in which self-seeking is as prevalent as the weather.

Dear Abel:
I am a solemn owl.

I did finally complete a letter to him which ran somewhat as follows:

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Dear Abel:

Is true love compatible with doubt? I ought long since to have confessed to you my ambivalence, but lacked the courage. Forgive me.

In your company perhaps others were as happy as I, but none of them with such justice. I am to blame through no fault of my own that I could not remain so. Perhaps the proper thing for me to do is to pick a fight with reality. I do not know.

Here is the simple, honest word that I cannot go on. Understand it with grace. Perhaps one day it will not be so. God bless you.

Clara

Nothing remained to be done but to stamp and seal the letter, and to deposit it in the mailbox. After doing so, I returned upstairs with nothing to do that afternoon but water the geraniums on my window sill.

CHAPTER FIVE

I am an ascetic by virtue of my devotion to the real in spite of the fact that I am a liar. But my devotion to the fantastic renders life endless. Still and all, it might be efficacious to make up my mind about God before it is too late. I must say He seems gracious to some very peculiar people so that I can hardly expect Him to be pleased by my merits and act accordingly. If He did, He might allow me a blesseder spot where I could say my prayers in the dark without fear of being slugged. However, before I find out what-ho, I shall attend my funeral only in spirit. Sweeney's Funeral Home is entirely too smelly for me. Besides, you will be pleased to know that I am only half dead; although a fall on the ice has made it necessary for me to rest a few days in my cold, unventilated room which feels rather like a coffin. And here it is very nearly Christmas again when such care-worn old creatures as I must recover their bounce and grin and be obliged to accept that things at their worst are as good as they are ever going to be, which perhaps they are. At least I thought so until last Thursday when I had my fall. Now I am not in the habit of haunting the mailbox, but since I was house-ridden, I daily indulged the fantasy that something of extreme interest awaited me there. And lo and behold!—This morning I received a Christmas card from the mailman himself. Is it not extraordinary that immediately I received it I felt perfectly well enough to run uptown and have my hair done at the Pierre? Well so I did and bought two plum cakes beside.

How damp it was and how blustery the wind the day Abel arrived at my door to deliver his personal letter of protestation. The fact is he had suffered a vast deal from my rejection and was determined that I know it. You doubt me? Think me incapable of arousing such emotion? Why is that? Frankly I am rather annoyed that you suppose me a liar: why was I so anxious to confess it? Beside, how do you know that I am not lying about being a liar?—that I do not demean myself merely to impress myself upon you. After all, I am less bothered by growing old than by growing obsolescent. God help you, perhaps *you* are a liar, though less canny than I because you do not perceive it. At sixty-five the world begins to seem a little thin: to thicken it I sometimes fabricate; but let me assure you that it is a most curious thing that virtue should show itself in a love of the real when so much of the past disappears almost as if it had never *been* real.

But I remember vividly the October morning Abel arrived to deliver me that sorrowful letter pleading that I meet him an hour later for a walk. I found him, decked out in merton cap and knickers, waiting at my stoop at eleven.

Now Abel was long and thin and when walking it was impossible to keep up with him; he stretched his neck when he walked as if he wished to be applauded for moving so rapidly. We kept silent the whole while. Finally reaching the park, we sank exhausted on the grass.

"Come back." Spittle on the corner of his lips.

I could not speak because I feared to deny him. I believe I was honestly afraid he would injure me physically.

"What will I do for the rest of the day?"

"I can stay with you a while."

He turned his head sharply away.

"Come back."

I touched his hand—withdrew it instinctively. Not unkind, only afraid.

"Please."

"I can't."

I would rather have stabbed him at that instant than endure his pitiful stare. Had I long ago not stared so myself? You understand me? I shuddered slightly with sudden loathing. He must have seen it,—how our carefree hours filled with laughter became abhorrent to me then. Alas that such lovely things can become repulsive from any point of view. I do not understand myself.

Attempting to rise, Abel scraped his foot on a stone and found himself on all fours. He looked as though he were falling down a precipice—so shocked was he by this final proof of the hostility of destiny. He got up as though he wanted to hide somewhere from himself, and once on his feet, set off running like a madman as though he were pursued.

I wanted to rush after him to beg his forgiveness. I did not move. And then the rain began. I longed for peace: the feeling that I was back in childhood again. Is man's fine not present there? Fantasy, not memory, prompted me to believe so. Childhood, the refuge of failure. To return once and for all—you are not concerned. I must speak more of Abel, must I? Comfort him for you, make it all right? I cannot. Someone else, then? Whom? I lied when I said I lacked friends as a child. I once knew a girl named Janet Fleishman. We playacted grand opera at her house every afternoon. She insisted I act the man. I learned to hate her. This is awful. Shall I always be bound to speak of myself? There was this girl named Janet Fleish-

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man. Brooklyn girl. This is how I sound when I'm honest. Do you believe that? Are you a simpleton or a scholar? Neither? Who are you? Do you despise me? I do not care. Being alone, I have found what is precious to me in solitude. It is enough. I am lying.

What I did onstage that night would have turned Duse green. The very life went out of me as I walked mechanically through my role. The laughs I received were guarded, almost hostile (did I imagine them so), and the audience seemed restive whenever I was onstage. It was, I believe, from that evening on I became subject to the despondence during performances that I spoke of earlier, a despondence that affected not only my art but my personal life as well. Normally solitary, I now grew morose; I felt like shutting the day and all its feelings out. I spent most of my waking hours in reverie, much of the time wandering through the streets as though in search of something.

Once a dedicated artist, I now let personal feelings interfere with my work. And my guilt grew boundless as theatrical life began to lose for me all the charm and variety I had thought to be indigenous there. I believe my colleagues must have noted a change in me though I was careful to guard myself from them at every possible moment. When questioned about my health I pleaded fatigue and politely declined all invitations that season. However, when Jacob Adler pressed me to attend his annual Chanukah celebration, I was aware that it would have been highly irregular to decline.

The day of the celebration found me dull and lethargic. I had been sitting idly on the sofa the entire morning. It was time to dress. I tried to get up, to take a turn about the room, to collect my thoughts, fix them upon a definite object, and then, having set myself straight, to bathe and dress. But the very thought of moving appalled me. How I managed to prepare myself I do not know, but once on the street I felt somehow stronger. On my way I noticed an organ grinder weeping. His monkey had suddenly died. He bent over it lovingly, pleaded with it. Then quickly, violently, he began to slap it. Did that somehow refer to me? I arrived at Adler's house an hour late. Once inside the door, I heard:

"My daughter once had the habit of pulling her ears."

"What do you sup*pose* she's pulling now?"

Raucous laughter greeted my entrance. No one had noticed me. I fixed myself a scotch and sat alone in a corner of the room. The decorations seemed all opulence and *élan*: tables set with Turkish figs, Spanish melons, persimmons. Feeling slightly giddy, I rose and began to mill around. Everyone looked exceedingly *soigné*: the fat costume designer who was exercising her dog wore a new hat—a grotesque plum-colored affair. Was there some meaning in that? Grinning, mincing, fidgeting, actors slapped one another on the shoulders, actresses embraced. One young ingénue who had been with us the previous season boasted shrilly what she had been doing, the reviews she'd received; and upon spying Jacob with the *hors d'oeuvres*, at once gave him a resounding kiss.

I heard: "Nevertheless, the essential reality of Christ is a noble idea to contemplate."

"But what after all is Christian mercy if Christ never laughed nor wept?"

"Who said He never wept," I chimed. Suddenly I was shouting in dissention and at that precise instant aware that I was trying to win over people I had begun to loathe, detest from the depths of my being. It became enormously important at that moment to record my feelings which seemed at once both new and familiar. "Intellectual tourists," I scrawled on a napkin, "glib and gallant of phrase. I never particularly enjoyed exchanging ideas with people. Perhaps I am at fault." I imagined myself an important artist recording my impressions in the midst of a gathering. Several watched me with curiosity; I felt ashamed of the satisfaction it gave me. Had I to enjoy the attention of the very people I maligned? Surely if I were renowned, I could endure their stares with indifference, be at liberty to make social blunders, even to express my hostility, yet be received with reverence and love.

A bearded stranger approached: "Tell me honestly as a friend: are you happy?"

Tears came into my eyes at the insult to my dignity. I muttered something incomprehensible and escaped from the room.

The next instant the figure of Boris Thomashefsky appeared before me: a frigid, wrathful figure, with a harsh gaze and stiffly polite expression of disapproval. I yearned to talk to him. He too was alone. But I turned instantly away and threaded my way among the actors. "You should leff hottily from mine jukks witt smot-crecks," someone brayed. Grabbing my coat I slipped out the door: The next evening I gave my notice: I was never to return to the theater again.

CHAPTER SIX

Four a.m. and I am unable to sleep. I feel like a burglar in my own house: soundless air, motionless streets, my neighbors asleep. . .Yesterday I invited my mailman in for plum cake and coffee. No doubt he regarded my invitation as a piece of cheek, but I shan't bother about that now. The fact is, he seems a right sort of fellow—an affable, witty, and tolerant person of most agreeable scope who, except for his willingness to go about without teeth—why do I lie? My time is limited. At any rate, our snack was perfectly *bien fait*. I glanced at him during several pauses in our conversation. Each time he nodded vigorously as though to cover his embarrassment chewing. I understand that. He moves me in small ways. After our snack he invited me for a short stroll in the neighborhood. He held my hand. This means a great deal to me. Oh we'd no want of discourse for we've much in common: No interest in vacations as they are practiced in this country, nor for that matter do we like going where other people go, nor doing the things they do. Something's wrong with me. He likes to expertize everything he does. Let me explain. He has never been known to drop a letter face downwards into the mailbox. He told me so himself. Oh I like immensely what I know of him: he seems a man of natural goodness and generosity which perhaps others neglect to notice in the

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face of his prowess in other respects. Everything he wore so fresh and clean and he himself so vigorous and alive, Malachy Maloney's his name and stout in brawn and bone a merrier-hearted man I've never known and oh la-la—I gave him a snapshot of myself which was a token of my effulgence but more than that I cannot—oh listen! I allowed him to kiss my hand, which was a way of showing my extraordinarily friendly spirit. Ah, thought I, I shall be his celestial paramour, and had just begun to call down the blessings of heaven on us, and was gazing into the air, when he took me round and kissed me! God help me, I am a miserable sinner, but I enjoyed it so that ever so gently I bit his nose. You needn't have read that lie; you needn't have read it at all. May I spend your time? You must excuse me, but no he did not kiss me, nor would I have known what to do if he had, though perhaps I craved it. You see, I've never known how to behave with a man. I can't listen to their words, do you understand? I am removed. I do not know what preoccupies me, but so much is happening and I long to be alone with my dreams. . . .At my door he asked:

"May I call on you again?"

"You now have a green light," said I.

And I hated him so—wanted to push him away for unsettling me, disturbing me—bringing to mind my winters thirty and forty years ago when there was no end to the possibilities of experience. I want my memories. I'll grow old with memories. For God!—It seems to me the world was never duller than now, never more routine or mechanical. Things that are revelations today seem obsolete tomorrow, and only occasionally is there something else than disaster in the newspapers. It is these memoirs alone that guard me in the midst of everything profane. But I wish from them more than that; I wish to change. But into whom I do not know when nearly everyone about me seems repugnant. Ah, you say, it is precisely that which you must change. Maybe you do not, but if you do, such thinking bores me purple. Suppose, for example, I met my double, and she should see me metamorphosed into a social being. She should detest me, should she not?

I did not think the past could disturb me so. Is it the past? I had simply hoped to interest you in it because it seems to me something extraordinary. Perhaps in essence though, it is no different from yours. Certainly, my looking back is no different. I have the same sensation as the circle begins to close: I take a last peek, an occasional puff on my cigarette, and murmur a simple prayer or two. But I feel enormously disturbed. I said that before. Since I am an orderly person, my dishes are scrubbed and my room picked up. Nothing remains to be done but—how can one restore savor to life when life has lost it? By sleep, exercise, gestures of the will? Nothing seems particularly to matter. You must already have observed—. No. I do not know what I wish to say. The will lost in hollow ease. What I want I suppose is a general feeling of health and solvency,—the thrill that I once experienced in small things that no longer thrill me at all. Things like chocolate and daisies. I never especially cared for daisies. My mailman walked with me. I wanted a flower. Shall I fall in love again or have I been vaccinated against that calamity? Love. Is it any more important than thinking about the nature of my relation to what I see out the window every morning? You must help me to change. Perhaps it is too late. It was always too late. Does the harm of early hurt teach a purpose to pain? A rather quackish subject so I shan't pursue it. Enough. I have closed my life upon the wind, celebrating shadows,—a rather elaborate way of putting it. But concerning this matter a touch of rhetoric is excusable. What matter? That is not for me to say. Now fat Cupid's angelic delight flies graveward. Perhaps my chief fear is that I will never be able to die. I once had a constant desire and hope of something after death. I sated myself in it. I was morbid. I told you that already. There seems a special quiet incidental to the falling of snow. I am slow to heal. Have you the patience to care? No matter. It is I who must care. But at my ripe age I'm sure I'll never—. It is impossible at my age to remain unchipped and uncracked. One ought not to repine. Though reason tries to suppress desire in the name of order, desire inevitably retaliates by blasting that order. That is a very serious thing to say at this time of the morning. I am wearing a nightcap now that I have not worn for a hundred years. Oh elderly infant in the mansion of the dead! Excuse me. Does grief have itself to end in? All this sounds a bit pale, but I could not change it without mussing it up. Too bad. A very heavy frost this morning; the roofs are covered with snow: a minor phase of immensity.

I shall pass over in semi-silence the period of anguish I endured after my abandonment of the theater. Suffice it to say, at thirty, I mourned for my life. My habit was to rise at ten, purchase my daily sustenance, and sit motionless until bedtime in my room. Things pleasurable to others—walks, the cinema, concerts—seemed abhorrent to me. I sat in my room with the china-blue curtains and prayed that such pain, creative as faith, would will Messiah to my gate, and he in human form, a godling if you like. Oh my sweet bald godling! All my life I have searched for you through a series of dark rooms. I entered each and called to you. Always you were silent. If you had come just once from behind the curtain and kissed me gently on my—well-o—cheek, so plump and red—oh! How gentle you seem. Is it permissible to touch your hand? Be merciful. Just your touch. Your touch is all I crave, even now—this withered cheek. Oh inhuman man!

Thus now I dream and even then I dreamed. So passed a year spent in self-castigation so legible, so willed, that it cannot do otherwise than offend you. But perhaps in your eyes I deserved such punishment. However that must not concern me here. I mean now to share with you a slowly arising passion that distracted me at the end of that period, a passion so powerful, so consuming, that to express it aptly, I have need of the blandishments of a fat and happy muse.

That passion was reading. I read voraciously and almost without ceasing. Is it possible to share with you the Catholic gorgeousness of a Dante, Milton's strident cry? I

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thrilled, wept, sweated—. Oh at first it was all Swedish to me. But quietly, eventually, a sort of light leaped in my brain, and I began to contain the world wholly in their perception of it. But it was I who perceived, my eyes ashine with tears, the genius of Shakespeare and Chaucer. The hugeness of them abashed me. The dingier my facts, the more lustrous their fictions and I was hungry, so hungry for a bit of beauty. How I sat home nights feasting on Donne's intricate play of sense, Herbert's glory. Oh I did not attempt to gobble them down, but I savored them slowly, ever so slowly till their tranquil temples all but crashed in my mind and I fell into a sound and lovely sleep. Weeks later I rose to the richness of Marvell, and those visions of Blake that only my steep dreams remember. For Austen I developed a discrete affection, but for Dickinson, a full and abiding love. And Dostoyevsky, Yeats, Joyce,—with their books I was regardless of time, regardless—. Oh I cannot tell you and I will not teach you, though I am a scholar of genius. Yes, a mere scholar.

How and when my calling dawned upon me I do not know. But with books my recovery commenced. Ideas became the bread of life to me, and curiosity, the appetite of my intellect. I longed to return to those classics I had only skimmed in my youth, to learn in their own tongues of Sappho, Aeschylus, Pliny, Catullus, to visit their worlds of enchantment humbly, devotedly, and to work in them with all the cunning of my love. But I had to do this under the guidance of a teacher, soon, immediately I was able.

I remember the day I enrolled in Columbia's PhD program in the classics, the sun shone on abundant leaves: I did not need to be assured that it was right to be made happy by these things.

CHAPTER SEVEN

I have become so accustomed to the rain that today's sunshine seems irritating. Nevertheless, I was obliged this morning to go shoplifting for any number of daily necessities including tea for my mailman (yes, he is coming again), when a neighbor of mine, an elderly Spaniard, stopped me on the street and related to me some of his experiences in Spain. When he had finished, I asked:

"And have you been to Spain?"

"How can you ask me that," he rejoined, in utter amazement.

And a few moments ago something exceedingly strange happened. Let me tell you about it. I saw from my window a young man of healthy limbs take three steps, jerk himself forward with both feet together, and stop for a count of six. He repeated the pattern nine times and then continued walking normally. Well! Are there others beside me who make absurd demands upon themselves, ordinary people who display shamelessly their abject passions? But all this is purely casual.

When Oliver Goldsmith declared, "None but the guilty can be long and completely miserable," he was referring to me. Why, for example, do I, who remember an unhappy youth, dwell so insistently on the past? Do I really suppose by so doing I will come to better terms with life now that it will soon be over? Ha! It seems for the past few days former injuries have begun to loom up and sting me into such a rage I can barely breathe. And yet my recent awareness of these—as though something in the depths of my being were settling forward, adjusting, and arranging itself—is that perhaps meaningful?

First back at school, life pattered along superbly. The University was beginning to draw a faculty of fine scholars from the West, and I all but worshipped them. Angels take a variety of forms, and I prefer those quiet ones that labor hard from love. I did the same, in truth, and read, reread, adored and learned the wonders of the word and world, and wept and slaved until I'd learned to please myself and God. It is here that Professor Imphrick enters the picture.

Albert Imphrick, forty-nine, husband, father, don, professed at Yale till forty-three, then love-lorn came to me. He came to me a mournful lass, and preached to me of Job—oh stop it.

Dear Albert: How busy you must be, how far away from me must be your thoughts. Do you remember our class?—Helen Wooley, Mark Nudell? I would be back there then: your pupil who wrote feelingful poetry, and you, my master, loved me best. ("Have you a new poem for me, Clara? Always eager to see...") Oh fearsome man! You'd a bewitching quality about you—an exceptional power of attracting, of enslaving, dominating. Though not handsome, your face was often animated: a siccaty and ascetic quality about your mouth though, and your eyes—positively ugly—something so hard in their gaze. You were handsomely built, and on the intellectual side, more retentive than creative, but in the execution of your scholarly duties—superb. Your intelligence was unmistakable, but your manners abhorrent, even to the point of slurping your soup. In character, you were resolute and domineering: ("What's all this self-indulgence in one so young, so gifted—lot on the ball.") Your continual unfaithfulness to your wife weighed on your conscience not at all for you believed implicitly in everything you did and remained faithful to me only as long as I did not bore you. You condemned depravity with exaggerated severity, though cared not a whit for your own. (I may remark in passing here that I was the accomplice of that depravity.) We'd everything sexually—that is, except—you couldn't:

"What does not depend upon sanction fails. It was ever so."

"I don't understand."

"This never happened to me before. You see, I'm a happily married man—. Shouldn't I have said that?"

"Oh I'm glad. But I prefer you didn't mention it again."

"Of course."

Sun's out. Always hated the sun. Makes me wince.

"The poems, Clara, lack an incident, a legend in which to incorporate them. They seem—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Why not write of the things that pass you by, daily facts without?—Men, women, flight of birds—why not have a go at them?"

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"Do you believe in me though?"

"Clara, criticism is a gift for which you should be grateful." Bewitching man. Albert!

"What is it, Clara?" You took my hand and held it fast. Ordinarily you were not affectionate, so there was something extraordinary in your touch.

"If I could only remember the pleasure I once felt in the simple things of nature. But when I see the sunrise, I think: oh another weary day to be got through filled with feelings of ill-being and despair."

"And so at moments with all of us—it's the nuances, however, a question of degree. But you in particular must get at the roots, find the causes."

"What's the good of delving into the past when I haven't the will to change the present?"

"You must acquire the will."

"But sometimes I don't care to—"

"It too you must resolve."

Sun's behind the clouds. Dark, cold. Clouds going round and round.

You hugged me on the street once—suddenly, without warning. Then:

"You should marry, Clara. You've so much to give a man."

We saw in the windows of a fruit shop succulent plums, pears that made us think of Rubens, pungent grapes. "Yes?" "Yes." I love you.

"Nature does not suffer for us, only we for ourselves. Look, Clara! The sky's a brilliant blue, the grass—"

Come! I would not feel strange with you. A quality, something about you—. Excuse me, I cannot explain myself.

"Clara, the fool as well as the wise man can give appropriate answers to life's vicissitudes: fortitude in the face of danger, patience in the face of duress. But it is only certain of us who are able to reach, to console. And you must be willing to grant us those abilities, for in thus taking, you will also give. Oh you've so much to learn, child, yes? of the true nature of charity, of goodness. Indeed," you declared, warming to your subject, "the fascination of evil has nothing on the fascination of good. Evil is kidstuff. But we've a mass-notion of morality—our conception of good and evil indexed to the point—"

"Yes, yes," I exclaimed. "But do you not still believe that the truly great artists—Bach, Mozart, Shakespeare—had to be—well—basically decent in order to create—"

"An attractive fantasy."

"Oh but it's true!"

"But we've evidence to refute—"

"I don't care."

"I'll not awaken in you an obstinacy which I cannot subdue."

Overzealous God! A glory I can't express. Vision of a huge iron door. Cry out—can't cry out. My flesh cries out for a slender key to unlock the flesh of you I adore. The rain. Thick, heavy. A wet woman. God! One cannot suffer from memories all the time, you know. One must rest a bit in the intervals. Think. Of what? Such thoughts question the abolished man.

I was always in my spiritual life dependent upon people stupider than myself. But I listened to them. You see, I was pretty sure in life to do as I was told:

"Dance for me, Clara."

"Must I?"

"Yes."

Shyly I raised my arms and drew an arc. Toes pointed at Albert, I lifted my right leg high, pliéd with my left, whirled myself around in swift, audacious movement. Then: quick, birdlike, I twirled, leapt, danced, until suddenly, as though my wings had been clipped, I sank at his feet in a graceful heap.

"You charm me, Clara."

"I'm glad."

"You have made me happy many times, and yet, it seems I haven't a talent for happiness."

"How is that?"

"I am bound up in others, immerse myself in their lives so as to aid them, set them straight—"

"And yourself?"

"It is of others I think always, and then, when they no longer have need of me, I leave."

"Will you leave me then?"

"When you are a woman."

My two big dark eyes fixed upon your face.

"Oh my poor girl."

"Don't call me that."

"It is not out of the question that extraordinary things may yet happen."

"No."

"You are blessed with gifts, Clara. It is only stubbornness and ill-humor, and not any limitation of the mind, that prevents you from expressing yourself fully—. What a child you still are."

"Oh Albert, how can you be so certain that you can uncover the vital circumstances of another's feelings by declaring this one a child and that one a fool. You sit in judgment so calmly, without any sense of participation. Speak of those things for which you have feeling!"

"You are lovely, Clara, even in anger. However, the theme of our discussion is the question...."

1A, 2B, 3C, 4D, 5E,—No, we all think this way sometimes. What's W. Double-u. Ha! Or Z? Oh Malachy knows where he'll be. Trots from house to house. Not me. 7G, 1A, 1A, 13M = Gootman, Abel, Albert, Malachy. GAAM. Let me confess to you I've a talent for oblivion. Do you know Y? My thoughts, my mind—I've a meaning I can't find. Yet I can express—am I expressing—let me confess—

I have had to go out in order to clear my head. I meant only to take a short stroll in the neighborhood, but before long, finding myself at Sixty-Eighth Street, I decided to enter the park.

I climbed a hill and sat beneath a tree. Cold. Wet. The branches of the tree clad in snow-white. Birds frozen in the tree. . .

Sleighriders threw snowballs in their multi-colored costumes. A solitary boy was building a snowman. I thought to help him, and though ashamed, rose and began walking towards him. Immediately he spied me, he ran up to me—a

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ragged gypsy boy with dirt stains on his round little face:

"Please, have you got a quarter?"

"I haven't," said I.

"Please, I suffer."

I emptied my purse of what amounted to two dollars and forty-five cents. As soon as he took it he began to edge away.

"Will you buy soup and bread?" I called

His grim little face set hard. I think he meant to weep.

"Where do you come from, child?"

"I come from my mother's cunt-ry," he bellowed, and dashed away in the snow. "Please, I suffer." Unhappy boy. May you always ascribe your misery to earthly hindrance and no other.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Yesterday is gone. When the sun filled my room this morning it made me happy to be alive. I shall see Malachy today! Everything—I tell you, everything—is lost in this one anticipation. Yet how can that be when I was so frightened last Thursday by his regard? Listen. It is because for the past few nights I have been bitterly cold. I have been so cold at night in my bed. And vainly sought him beside me and awoke in the mornings with my arms outstretched. It is because I am weary of grumbling like a butcher's cat for something warm. Because I am not deceived that at brief moments I can read true sympathy in his eyes and at these moments become almost precious to myself. Because he seems essentially different, more hungry perhaps, than those others, fattened on reality, for whom I could never care. It is because I have found a friend and observe what he does and how he lives that I can better live with myself. It is because I believe I have met someone who has touched my heart.

And yet I am haunted by Albert as by something repellent that nevertheless draws me to it. At these times my imagination can shape no other figure than his, and though I am filled with loathing and dread, still I can conceive of nothing more gratifying than to think of him and converse with him in his absence. At these moments I deceive myself thoroughly about the future. . . . He was a man of intellect, yet there was nothing extraordinary about his mind. He'd a certain lack of sensitivity, a peculiar impatience with the merely beautiful. He did not respond, as I did, for example, to Chekhov. Perhaps I did not know as much as he but my heart was mine.

"It is beautiful, Albert."

"How do you find it beautiful?"

"It makes me weep and at other times I burst with happiness."

"A superb Bronx reaction."

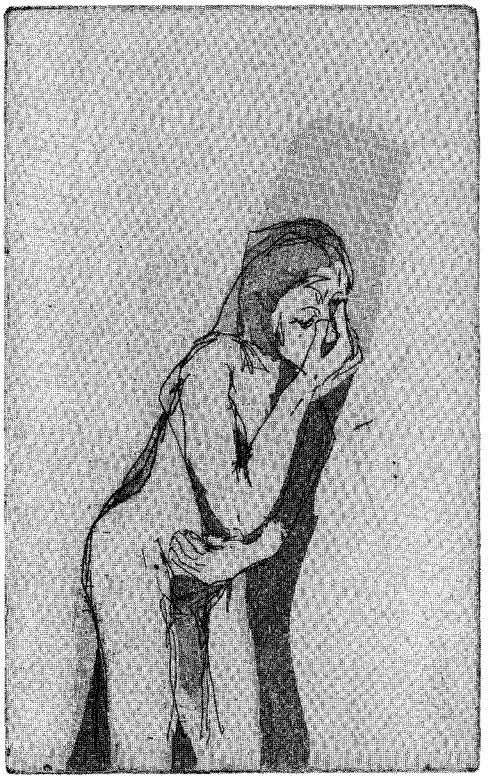
"Oh Albert, I don't express myself cleverly, but I speak from my heart when I say he writes of people who bear their misfortunes patiently and with dignity."

"Yet his characters live in a state of continual dissatisfaction with themselves. They are weary of life from idleness though they live in the most peaceful conditions imaginable. It is ill-humor and listlessness that destroy their living forces, for they are not forced to such an outlook by physical want alone."

"Yes, yes," I exclaimed, "but through them we learn what a little part reason plays in the passions."

"Ah," he rejoined, "replace reason with passion and one cannot think at all."

"But what has that to do with—. Albert, must it be either-or?"



"By no means. In most normal people a balance is implied."

"A balance—a balance?—When as children we yearn for a future filled with wonder and brightness—and rush toward it and step into a mire?"

"Is it of yourself you are speaking, Clara?"

"No. Yes—You don't understand. Listen. Last night I dreamt of a pony in my closet. When no one was looking I opened the door. Shyly he trotted toward me and bowed down his beautiful face that he might eat from my hand. I removed a fat fly from his nose and slit its wings. Then, placing my head on the side of the gently chewing animal, his winey smell came to—and his eyes, so large and dark with sorrow. I kissed his eyes!"

"Child, you have dreamed of love."

"Never mind that. I mean—and what does reason have to do with it?"

"I don't follow your logic."

"We must feel, Albert. Feeling is everything."

Feeling is everything! Albert, let me not speak unkindly of you. It's only my anger—. For I cared for you once

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with my whole heart. Yes, it was a case of first love with me—ardent, ridiculous, splendid. Awake and dreaming, you filled my thoughts. In the day I could neither laugh nor weep, and at night I had the hope of never waking. I wept, talked wildly to myself, paced savagely in my room, and at times so bitterly hated you that if I had had the courage I would have run a knife through your heart—yes—cried out against the passion with which you filled me, against your sudden appearances and disappearances, and the longing in which they resulted—yes—though you entrusted yourself to lead me through life, to attend to my spiritual education, to bless and console me in my pain. . . .

Do you remember the evening you invited our class to your house—your wife was at a concert—and read to us "Oedipus at Colonus" in its entirety, explaining its true meaning, and expressing yourself with such vigorous animation that you lost your wig? The class laughed uproariously, and you yourself, though overcome with embarrassment, began to join in the fun. I alone remained unmoved. Later you took me aside:

"Does it not amuse you to see your old mentor embarrassed?"

"It does not amuse me."

"The laughter of others is a painful reproach to you, Clara, and in encountering it, you are thrown back upon yourself by the very forces that should remove you from yourself. And you make no effort—forgive me, but you cut off your nose to spite your face."

Oh Albert, was it you I spited in my mournfulness, for fear of losing you? Did I thus hold on to you for dear life however you poisoned me with your solicitude? But you did care, truly cared, and on that I thrived. Oh why do I paint you bad? You were excellent and fine and it was I—

Forgive me, the downstairs buzzer.

I'm back! Malachy's climbing my stairs. We've a good six minutes. I have had it in mind to say and might as well say now that I am wearing my new Charis: unlike the ordinary corset, the Charis garment produces symmetrical proportions, and long smooth lines, by means of its exclusive patented design, which permits individual adjustments at the discretion of the wearer. Without objectionably heavy boning, I am enjoying a firmly supported bust, a flattened abdomen, a naturally defined waistline, narrowed hips, and long, slim thigh lines so rigidly required by current—here he is!

Listen quick, for I'll tell you no lies—Malachy came to take me to stroll—oh hear from the start how the weatherman turned most sadistic and brought us a downpour. . . .

"Where's me overcoat?"

"You're not going!"

"To fetch us some proper Guinness, lass. Have you chips?"

"And crumpets as well."

He scampered out the door. I buttered the crumpets, smacked me cheeks, and laid the doilies out—when back he came so drenched and drawn:

"Here's a towel for you now."

"That's good of you, lass."

And rubbed him dry and down we sank and drank a pint of stout.

"Are you fond of this town," said I.

"The bee's knees. And you?"

"Oh how I manage to keep alive here is more than I can imagine."

"The lord save ya'."

"I'd as lief have a good donkey and a few blossoms to engage my days—"

"Gettin' flutered?"

"—A few blossoms than endure—"

"Aye, but it's your roots."

"Yes."

"I'm from Kilkenny meself—bonnie and cool."

"Oh yes?"

"The bee's knees. Gettin' flutered?"

"Oh no!"

And then:

"Do ya' care for me, Clara?"

"Oh yes."

"You do not."

"I do."

"They don't at work."

"But why?"

"They take the mickey out o' me."

"Oh, you shouldn't let them."

"Should I not?" And then he took my hand—and we sat there for a long while dreaming perhaps of something. After a while he got restless and pulled himself up and told me he felt a little hungry. So I got up immediately and went into the kitchen where I began to smear mayonnaise on a ham and turkey sandwich. Then while we were eating, I said: "You know so much about me, and I know almost nothing about you." "What do you want to know," he asked. "Do you freeze bread?" "No." he answered, "I keep it in the breadbox." And we laughed like children. He drinks his coffee black.

"No, seriously," I said. "Tell me something more."

And he told me that his folks were farmers from Kilkenny where he was brought up to feed chickens and milk cows and that when he was a teenager his baby sister died of diphtheria, so soon after he got up a terrible passion to be a doctor, but he was too poor to go to school. Said he was always very serious and didn't know many girls by the time he came to this country and got married. Then after his wife died he kept pretty much to himself and that he guessed I could call him something of a loner. "Yes," I said, "I always thought you were a loner. . . ."

Then I stopped listening to you—and remembered the gentle way you held my hand—and you became for me a small lad who milked the cows in Kilkenny and dreamed in the stalls. Did you dream of a woman, lad, lonely in the stalls? Had you a sweet body, ripe and firm? Were you lonely in the stalls? Did you water the horses in Kilkenny, were you scared of your pa? Were you hale and hearty and good to your ma? Did you milk the cows in Kilkenny, were you lonely in the stalls? Now portly man of sixty, oh proud cockatoo, who is your equal in love?

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CHAPTER NINE

When nature forsaw the birth of Malachy Maloney, she sought in him an agreement between mind and body that was unutterably sweet. Picture a short, squat torso balanced on little bow legs that dance, flat-footed, like a penguin, when they move. Glance up to see a pair of wide and innocent eyes, like those of a dreaming beast, a squabby, thick-set nose, and a sweet and smiling mouth. Frame all this with a mop of ginger-colored hair, and you've a snapshot of a man naive yet sensible, gorbellied yet grand, whose blitheness has not forsaken him—(and who is his equal in diligence when it comes to the execution of his duties?). Set upon action, he has little time for speculation, much less for sorrow,—and as soul and body forget themselves in happiness, he is as unconscious of himself as a splendidly healthy animal. His spontaneity and joy make him my chief of men.

Now as the great event of the present week has been the appearance of spring, he took me the other night on a Staten Island Ferry Ride. To and fro we rode, disembarked, walked round *là bas,* and blathered—I scarcely recall of what—except this: He's heard somewhere that when miners from the North of England come up from darkness, they thank God for daylight. Though shy of it, he said, many of them are fine gardeners, and often bring flowers home to their wives. And it struck me then that I, who live in daylight, have often stood cold before the beauty of natural surroundings: the glow of the earth, mild evenings, a pure sky. It is a dire illness I suffer at these times, I'm certain, for such an attitude of self-denial rejects all innocent joys,—and most important, change—the change from day to night, of the seasons, flower and fruit—the wellsprings of life itself! How the passing of the seasons becomes a death rather than a rebirth to me then, as flowers bloom in the park and hang their heads. But now, in springtime? It is strange. Nature has affected me as never before. I begin to feel some of the brightness an old woman should feel when everything surrounding her becomes young again: the shut of evening flowers, liquid pearls, unintelligible flames of stars—the loveliness of these simple things—teases my longing for the sublime. I am talking too much. I never say exactly what I mean. I think I am acting now. No, that's not true. But do not think that this my happiness is actually real to me. It is at times as though it belonged to someone else. . . .

This longing for the sublime—. On my way to market yesterday, I found myself walking behind a blind man. I thought to cross the street to avoid—I don't know—confronting him, I suppose. But he had heard my footstep and said cheerfully, "Good morning." "Good morning," I returned warmly. Walking quickly, I passed him. And then, turning round, I glimpsed a pair of frightened eyes: the tall, hearty man was fumbling with his stick. I wanted to help him, but feared his shame. Continuing on my way, I dreamed of taking him home to tend, console, to make him glad. I wept later with such a mingling of joy and sorrow—impossible to explain.

But my feelings lately have been unpredictable because I myself am not well. I am suffering from an annoying and insistent pain in my lower abdominal tract.

During the course of my doctorate, I studied passionately and well, and though it has ever disturbed me to hear either praise or blame, my teachers praised highly my efforts and abilities. However, aside from my liaison with Albert, I preferred to remain anonymous to them, spoke seldom in class, and approached them only on matters relating directly to my work. Other than this, my account at school will be, for the most part, rather what I saw than what I did.

There were, to begin, my classmates, younger than I, many of whom competed wildly amongst themselves for scholarly honors and social prestige. As a whole, they didn't seem to be evil, yet they did not impress me as being good. Sometimes I felt they were sincere, but I could not trust them. At their parties, I seldom managed to speak to those who attracted me, and when I did, I didn't need anyone else around. But in the course of these encounters, I was invariably so awkward, stiff, and uncomfortable that social intercourse became extremely painful—one might say unbearable for me.

One evening in late October, I saw at a gathering a pregnant, rather quiet girl with great wide eyes. I felt an immediate attraction to her, and when our glances met, she smiled warmly at me. She looked in her mid-twenties, possibly older, and in spite of an unhealthy pallor, was extremely pretty. She immediately made herself useful to the hostess by offering around *hors d'oeuvres,* mixing drinks, and preparing the dainties. Her absorption in her activities, her total unselfconsciousness, so charmed and attracted me by contrast with my own self-absorbed passivity, that, though I knew it rude, I could not help constantly observing her. But the young lady was obviously not so timorous as I, for in a matter of minutes, she was at my side graciously extending her hand:

"I'm Noelle," she said, "I'm happy to meet you."

Her friendliness so charmed me that immediately we exchanged formalities, I could not help accosting her with questions. She answered simply and sweetly that she had recently lost her husband in an accident, was expecting her baby in May, had begun that fall to take her doctorate in music, and was studying the pianoforte. "And you?" she asked. I replied and she rejoined until, speaking and listening joyfully for some moments, we were suddenly at a loss for words. Eager to amuse her, I gathered the courage to ask her if she'd ever heard the story about the woman who etc., etc., etc. After I made sure she wanted to hear it, I twanged it out *sotto voce.* I must have thought it was the funniest story in the world, but curiously, I found myself laughing alone. I became extremely embarrassed and was flushing painfully when luckily we were distracted by a group of brazen young women who, standing beside us, made gaudy, tasteless jokes, and like myself, laughed aloud at their own want of meaning. Noelle suggested we take a walk and I happily complied.

With light hearts, we grabbed our coats and entered the chill night air. Noelle moved briskly and with grace, and

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though I had trouble keeping up with her, I felt grateful to be at her side.

"What made you leave the theater?" she asked suddenly.

I have ever dreaded that question because I feel its honest answer marks me a failure. And as I did not wish to lie, I told a partial truth:

"One gets so spoiled in acting class," I replied, "playing Shakespeare, Ibsen, Chekhov,—and then to come out into the commercial theater—the Yiddish theater in particular—pure corn."

"I'm sorry I asked," she said quickly. Aware she had touched a sensitive area, she looked sharply away. I changed the subject.

"Do you go out much?" I asked.

"Some,—my music occupies much of my time—it means a lot." How simply she answered, how candidly. "And, of course, school work—and then I must dust and sweep—" She paused here, "and think about the birth of my son."

"And if he is a girl?"

She laughed, displaying a set of long but pretty teeth.

"A boy! A boy!" she insisted.

Spying an empty bench in Gramercy Park, we seated ourselves and remained silent for some moments, lost in thought.

"You seem so serene, Noelle, so independent," I began, "and—forgive me—in spite of your tragedy, so open and joyous. How is it possible? Is it simply forgetting yourself and loving others? And how is that done?"

She laughed again—softly. "I suffered greatly at my husband's death," she answered slowly, "but now I manage to occupy myself with work; for if I did not keep busy, I would grow dull and unhappy."

"And when you are idle?"

"It is still pleasant to hunt for some agreeable music on the radio, or just to sit in the dark and think things over."

"I respect you tremendously," I exclaimed warmly. "It's strange—I have ever had great sympathy for those who bear injuries, but it is the strong and able who more often attract me."

"I understand that," she said.

As I walked Noelle to her trolley, we exchanged addresses, shook hands, and promised to call on one another as soon as we were able.

In my state of excitement, I decided to walk home. Walk!—I could have ridden a wild horse around the block. I had made a friend!—A friend in whom I could trust, confide. Life had hitherto seemed so dull. What a dazzling diversion! To befriend a woman, noble and benevolent, who offered me respect uncontaminated by flattery, to sun myself in her generosity, and to offer in return an attentive, sympathetic ear. I longed to confess to her of Albert—no—perhaps not—not yet—but I must be honest—. I walked briskly in the nippy October air, when quite suddenly, in the midst of a crowd, I broke into a skip. Adults peered, children laughed—I did not care—then bounding into a wild, frantic run, I ran and ran as fast as I could go, and tripped, and gasped, and laughed out loud—

Arriving home, I ripped off my clothes and prepared for bed. Sleep was impossible. My room was cool but I felt stifled by the heat. I sat down at the table in front of my open window. The moon was a shred of orange that evening, and the stars, not only misty, but bright as well. The neon lights from the bar across the street were flickering—first red, then blue. Noelle had worn blue. The screech of a passing trolley shut out the voices of an Italian couple arguing noisily upstairs. I breathed in the fresh, moist air, and, as though in a trance, surrendered myself to the images and dreams that came into my imagination. Towards four o'clock I heard my next door neighbor coughing. A scrawny, repulsive old man with a perpetual stink of garlic on his breath. Wretched man, I thought, and tears of pity for him came into my eyes. I'll go to him, I thought, I'll knock on his door and say: hello, I heard you coughing—may I offer you some tea and honey? I was half-conscious of the absurdity of my impulse—was it absurd?—but nevertheless quickly dressed and arranged myself. But by the time I arrived at his door, his coughing had stopped. I heard instead a long, soft snore, a sigh, and then silence.

Relieved, I returned to my apartment and lay till morning in fitful dreams.

CHAPTER TEN

A sharp ache tonight—not terrible—in my stomach—be better tomorrow—feels like—baby ready to be born—absurd—No—to think of my mother, think of my mother now. How she conceived of, carried me—full and thick she grew—like a dome, like a wave, like a dome—. All lust stilled in her then—and heard the cry of all green things.

Bore, tended—tried to nurse—no—no milk—bit, sucked, tugged—no milk—Noelle had milk—I know she had milk—her fatherless child—God takes care of all widows and orphans, Aunt Bertha said—Noelle had milk—

Bore, tended me, and died. When my mother died from me—under leaf, under darkness, under earth—earth in springtime—warm, wet, and friendly—palsied grass, the liquor of leaves—when my mother died from me—a cold scream split the sun—in springtime—

Earth in springtime, death in springtime—a great space in the darkness—black, flaying, iced—trees to the wind: touch me quietly now—I cannot comprehend the window, the carefully closed door—clocks tick in my mind—link my hours somehow to her hours—

Mama sits brooding by the large kitchen window, her gray linen dress down to her ankles, glass beads around her neck—looks mad—eyes sunk in her bony face: "Come here." Picks up a rusty shearing scissors. "Come here," she repeats—arrows in her eyes. I come—she sits, pulls me between her legs—and cuts off my hair too short like a boy's. "Why, mama?" "It's neater." Then pinches my cheeks hard—hurts me—"like apples," she says, and kisses my mouth.

The door slams. Saturday! Papa's home from *shul* in his shiny black studs—slaps his paunch: "Well?" "Mrs. Feinstein gave birth 10:30." "A boy?" "A girl a monkey."

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"From the doctor?" "The midwife—she was ashamed for a doctor." Mama gets up, goes to the icebox—the sharpness of her bent spine through her dress—"Twelve o'clock," she says, "Take her to the park already. Here's lunch." She takes from the icebox a brown paper bag. . . .It's late spring—men in shirtsleeves sitting on the stoop, children playing. Papa struts proud—doesn't see—his beard hangs down like lace. "Papa?" "Yeah?" "D'ya like my hair?" "It's neater." We find a bench; papa sits, sighs, takes from his pocket a little silver knife—from the bag a greasy package of salami. Cuts me a slice: "Take." I eat a tiny piece. "Chew it good." He cuts more and eats—makes noises with his mouth—won't look at me—stares ahead—chews. Mrs. Feinstein gave birth to a monkey. She was ashamed. I feel cold, suddenly. A child with winter in its teeth. Put more expression on your face, papa—look at me—what could I do that would make you look at me, talk? He cuts off another slice, pokes me: "You look like you're in pain—what hurts you?" "Nothing." What did I do wrong? "Papa?" "Yeah?" "Why was Mrs. Feinstein ashamed?" "Don't ask." Bites, chews, makes noises—I begin to cry. "What? What?" He takes me to him. I bury my head in his beard—tickles me—garlic from his mouth. I kiss him, kiss his beard, his bald head, eyes, mouth—crying, crying, kissing, crying—"What? What is it?" "I don't know, papa, I don't know." "Enough then! Eat." I eat.

However, soon, after befriending Noelle, certain of Albert's characteristics became repellent to me, I do not know. But things that had previously gone unnoticed became apparent, and in time, intolerable to me: the harsh, grating voice, the wide-slung, keening eyes that searched me studiously, cautiously for—God knows—something he meant to gain. And he, who seemed at times so kind-hearted and fine, I hated nevertheless—hated passionately the pedagogic loquacity that, when I spoke to him from my heart, presented me with clever platitudes, that generosity that made me its slave, judging, reproving, commending and dispraising until I felt myself some hoaxable little animal so tired insistently adjusting to the whims of its master that, for fear of the whip, it shivers in the corner and sulks.

It would have delighted me to become angry with him, but I was unable. Instead I tormented myself with recriminations: had I so long lived in an atmosphere of my own gods and heroes that I could not suffer a human man's intrusion? And what was the superb lie that hurled me from endeavor to negation? For even in his classes I was falling behind. The fact is, I shuddered even to look at him, and ceasing to listen to his lectures, comprehended nothing but my own loathing.

But I could not leave. Nor had I then the courage to confess to Noelle what I feared might offend a woman of such elevated moral purity, such straightforward honesty. In the beginning she spoke to me almost exclusively of herself, modestly, almost shyly, but with remarkable confidence in me: Her widowhood did not in the least confuse or intimidate her (she had full faith in the well-being of her child); rather it increased the courage of that innocent heart to realize the measure of its strength—a strength that would increase her energy and reveal new horizons which had hitherto remained unexplored.

Proud woman, noble woman! How ashamed she made me feel: did I visit her too often, did I enter as I should, stay too long, did my conversation please her? And that first time I expected her at my home where I planned to make my confessions—I glanced over my shabby furniture, the couch with the broken springs, my paltry possessions—and felt such intense shame, shame of myself, of my poverty, my chubby figure, short straight hair, the baseness of my heart and soul—no, I could not tell her, I could not confess the many lies and concealments I had made to cover my shame: she knew nothing of Albert, believed I dated frequently, was only a year her senior, and yes, God forgive me, that I was only half Jewish. But most terrible of all, I must confess myself a little bit in love with her—her full, heart-shaped face, the large ale-colored eyes, the extraordinary hands, so long-fingered and delicately veined. No! I could not. How could I for an instant unburden myself to a woman of such refinement, beginning with her upbringing, her careful blonde curls, the innocent charm of her feelings and judgments? Judgments! Did not such pure goodness of nature demand from others such goodness in kind? Did not such pride preclude mercy, forgiveness of offense, patience for the offender? And was such chastity uncorruptible by vice?

No, I did not tell all—I could not. But of Albert I managed one day to confess haltingly, ashamedly. When I had finished, she rose from her chair and took my hand. "You must stop it, you know. You are hurting yourself," was all she said,—and I looked into her eyes and saw tears. And I kissed her hands.

When Noelle invited me to her home the week after she had given birth to a baby boy, I was overjoyed. I had crocheted her gift well in advance—a rose-colored carriage blanket with little blue and white daisies embroidered in the corners.

Upon arriving at her door I was greeted by the arrogant shrieks of a new born baby. Ushering me over to the crib, Noelle greeted me hurriedly. "I think he's hungry," she whispered, and lifting him in her arms confronted me with a squirming little red creature, with squinting gray eyes, liver-colored lips, and a pink and downy head.

"How beautiful," I said—I thought I ought.

Transferring him to her left arm, Noelle seated herself erect in the upright lady's chair. With the other hand, she unbuttoned her blouse and held the naked child, his hands fumbling blindly, to her breast. I cast about for a topic of conversation—something—to control the confusion of thoughts whirling around in my head. I glanced at her furnishings: the comfortable green divan, the colonial desk and chair, the mahogany pianoforte—all shining and clean. Suddenly Noelle's laughter roused me: the infant had taken the breast; and his mouth absorbed at her nipple made sweet, gurgling sounds—guzzles, plops, drips—his tiny eyes squinting shut like a blissful old crone. And Noelle! How calm, how radiant! The sunlight dappling her large breast,

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like a speckled white fish—inviting, appalling—and the soft, pink nipple (I couldn't look—I did)—her eyes rapt upon her son—and the wee twirp nibbling, drinking—how hungrily he sucked, how well . . . Suddenly the baby pulled away, spat, hiccoughed, and grinned his toothless grin.

"Such well-fed gaiety," —I had said something.

Noelle looked at me with laughing eyes, and patting the tiny boy's backside, she kissed his frail, blue-veined temple.

"Do you want to burp him?"

I gathered the child in my arms, and walking back and forth, patted his back as is proper. His firm little body gave off a faintly sour smell—unbared a nerve in me. Patting him, I moved faster, held him tighter. He squirmed—like a bird stirring in my hand—its rapid heartbeat. I pretended him mine. Gently I bit his cheek—a little harder—Noelle was watching. I squeezed him for an instant as though to consume in me, in me, that frail red flesh. His rank smell came stronger—my arms tightened—Noelle was watching, her breast still exposed—the large fish—I grew nauseated—she was watching. I thought to touch her—it is not sex I mean—only touch, I wanted to touch—to tame the wilderness in me, to tame—the baby shrieked.

"You're hurting him," she cried out.

"I'm sorry—" She took him from me quickly and began to rock him, teasing, tweaking, cajoling, till the infant was silenced.

Placing him carefully into the crib, she arranged her blouse over her breast. My eyes began to twitch.

"Noelle," I began, "forgive me."

"For what?"

"I—I don't know." Could feel the pulse twitching.

"What's the matter—tell me," she insisted.

"No, it's only—no, nothing—I really should go—forgive me—you have a beautiful baby—a wonderful mother—" The voice came unsteady.

"Please, what is it?" she cried.

"I think, well, I think—I like you as a friend, I mean as a friend and I hope you don't—" she looked confused. "I like your baby. Well—that's all, and I think I want to go now." The eye burned, teared.

I rose quickly and grabbed my wrap. She put her hand on my arm. "Will you come back?" she asked.

"Yes, if you want—if you want me to."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

In the days following my disgrace at Noelle's, I was so shamefully and repellently unhappy that people diverted their gaze from me. Albert alone attempted to console me, as only he was able, during his last visit to me that semester before summer vacation:

Offering his rough cheek to be kissed, he asked:

"How are you feeling—spiritually?"

"Fine." I was barely audible.

Then he marched directly into my kitchen, as was his custom, and brought out the iced tea. Seating himself next to me on the sofa, he began:

"If you are not one whom reason would crush, then hear me out." He put on such monstrous airs! I couldn't listen. I heard only the harsh, droning voice, the measured pauses—. Finally when I had heard him declare:

"But my faith in you is not yet extinguished. I have watched you grow morbid and evil, been aware of it, reproached you with it, but had not the power to control—"

Suddenly I rose—Albert stopped talking—and as though in a trance, approached my desk. There I seated myself, and let the following flow from my pen:

"Reality has always been hard for me. You do not hold me when I sleep. That is reality. Shut your mouth and hold me now. No—it would be too embarrassing. Does nothing I do enchant you? Yesterday I tried to choke myself with a shoelace—blood ran from my eyes. I'm lying. Why do I lie so close to the truth? I felt *as though* I tried to choke myself—no, that's not it. It was you I meant to kill. Permit me to press your hand. Do you love my poems? Love me also a little. If you washed out your mouth with soap, you'd talk in bubbles. Nevertheless, you are a very rare man and that is why I love(d) you. But now there is someone else. My handwriting is my body odor—"

He grabbed the sheet from under my hand. I had not heard him approach. Head bowed, I sat rooted to my chair. His hand was rattling the paper. He must have read its contents several times; it seemed a full two minutes before he spoke:

"Who is the someone else?"

"No one."

"You were lying?"

"Yes."

"Come to the couch, Clara." I obeyed and seated myself on its edge.

"What do you want?" he asked, standing over me.

"Nothing." Drawing my silk shawl around my shoulders, I began to shiver.

"Would you rather I hadn't come today?"

"It's not that."

"Do you want me to go?"

"I don't care. I think you lecture me too much—that you don't care—care for me." I pulled the shawl tighter.

"And apart from this central idea of yours, you've nothing to add?"

"No."

"You know I've always felt pleasantly toward you," he said gently.

"I know—" The shawl ripped.

"And yet you write, with no apparent relevance, that it was me you wanted to kill—and then in the next breath—"

"I didn't mean that," I lied.

"Then what *do* you mean?"

"I don't—. I think maybe we should see less of each other—I mean—when you get back."

"Do you mean less or none of each other?" he hammered.

"I don't know."

He smacked my face. "You *must* know," he cried. "Will you not think of *me* for once? Will you not consider *me*?"

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And then he did something amazing. Seizing both my arms, he pulled me from the couch,—then quickly, violently, began to kiss me first on the lips, then all over my face, my throat—then to touch me with his hands—. He thinks he's holding me now, I thought. But this is not the way I want—this is not—. His hand brushed my breast.

With a violent jerk, I freed myself and moved stumbling to the door. For an instant his hands, as though still reaching out, flapped like short wings.

"Please go now," I said.

His figure hunched, as though in pain, his knees slightly bent, he picked up his cap and moved with mincing, very short steps, to the door. I remember his eyes.

"We'll let the end announce itself, if it comes, without proclamations," he whispered, "unless there is better, clearer, more definitive reason—in which case, a simple, honest word."

I shut the door after him.

My heart was pounding high. I paced wildly in my room—back and forth, back and forth. What a panic, what a panic—as though on the brink of some catastrophe, some great joy. I had hurt him—hurt him—my fingertips tingled, I kicked up my legs, sucked in my lip—I was alive, alive—almost trembling—like a mouse, like a mouse. Then I remembered his eyes. Whose eyes? Albert's. Whose eyes? Albert's I think. And sudden tears—a torrent of tears. Shame, shame—sweet mister, cool bastard, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry I hurt—. Come back, come back wherever you are. Albert, I am calling to you. Why don't you come to me? I remember your hunched-up figure. Whose figure? Albert's I think. Whose figure? Ashamed, felt ashamed—like in the park one day when papa tried to teach me to tell time on his gold pocket watch. I couldn't understand. Three times he repeated: "When the big hand is on the four and the little hand is on the ten—like this—twenty past ten. When the little hand is on the four and the big hand is on the ten—like this—ten to four. Understand now?" "Yes." "I'll test you. Now: When the big hand is on the twelve and the little hand on the six—like this—what time is it?" "I don't know, papa." "I thought you understood." He picked up the Yiddish paper. Began to read. "Papa, who made time?" "God." Papa knew the secret of the clock; God knew the secret of time. "Papa, teach me again." "Not now." "Teach me, teach me!" "Let me read." Papa and God know time and I know papa. "Papa, do you know *me*?" "Go 'way," he shouted.

And suddenly I ran from him far, far into the street. A green car came, almost hit me. And when papa got sick soon after with a heart attack, mama screamed: "*Your* fault, *your* fault papa's gonna die." Papa, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry I hurt—God hated me then. But why does He hate me now? The watch of our celestial Father has gone on the fat, gold blink. Sin. Sin to say. God will punish me. God has better things to do with his time. Papa knew the secret of the clock; God knew the secret of time. Does God know *me*? Who is God? Papa, I think. Papa, I think—is God the Father, and God the Spirit, father the clown, and father the horse, and love, the human light unshunnable.

I swallowed some scotch—straight from the bottle. Another and another. Grew hot. Stripped naked and prayed. Prayed naked, prayed naked, touching my breasts, my belly,—offering,—till I fell unconscious in a heap on the floor.

The following morning a note came in the post from Noelle. I tore it open and read the following:

Dear Clara,

You wretch! I have exerted myself in vain to find some justification for your rude and rapid departure from my house last Saturday. I know you like me and my baby (I've named him Christopher—is that not handsome?) You miserable wretch! You have a vigorous and healthy mind, a keen wit, and a thoughtful nature. Moreover, you are not sour-faced or small-souled. Then why have I not seen you? You are a little goose. Surely you cannot think because you held my child a little too closely for a moment, that you are unwelcome in my home. Wretch! There is much that is childish and immature about you. I really don't know how to talk to you. You mustn't be angry with me for saying this, but why do you torment yourself? You need happiness and healthy surroundings. You must marry and raise children. Really you must! You miserable wretch! Good heavens! I had always considered you a cheerful and plucky girl. Now I don't know what to think. Have you read Kahlil Gibran? Read him, unhappy girl, and then visit me this Sunday at two.

I need you and must therefore love you.

Noelle

CHAPTER TWELVE

Yesterday was rather a poor day for me. I had my abdomen examined by one Findlater Smith, M. D. "Your something has grown very something," he exaggerated, "in the process of aging." This is all distressingly ignorant on my part. Anyway, he gave me tablets for my pain and an appointment next week for x-rays. Malachy, however, seemed overly concerned:

"I'm terrible frightened for you," he said last night.

"But I feel fine!"

"You're not to lie. Himself gave you tablets and—" So forth. Oh we'd a lovely evening! Baked crumpets, drank wine, etc., after which Malachy declared, "I'm all puffed out," for which he got a terrible squeeze that served to prove the wheel of life is going round, and, of course, I mean to go round with it.

And yet I feel unwell. I know that I am much slower than I was, and that my face carries the tale of my years. And though I am learning, feel on the brink of something

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grand, it deeply disturbs me to sense this only with my heart and not with my limbs. Yes! I grow afraid–afraid that I will lack for time–. And so within these walls I shut out time, long for the eternal, believe in goodness–and though these be but precious fictions, though my only happiness should rest in my longing–

I think I am no longer one of those women who take a shortcut to happiness by declaring things other than what they are.

At first Noelle's note set my nerves ringing, and like a frail child dreaming, I spoke softly to her image in my mind. "I would like to rest with you now," I whispered, "to hold your hand. But I'm afraid you don't want to be touched. You never think of me." And she replied by a reaching round of arms. How my senses ached at it! I remembered how once walking, she had linked arms with me–and though overcome with gratitude, how ashamed I felt. She did not see. Perhaps she saw. So innocent she was of what she gave to me. I remembered her phrases, her words: "I need you and must therefore love you." But did not many women make such vain avowals?–even honest women of straightforward disposition? Was it thus possible that the loving and lofty heart, that character of most original beauty could dissemble from pity, lie from "kindness"? And in a moment I grew furious, and like a spitting snake, spewed at her the following: "I'm very sensitive to lies for my benefit; I've endured them so long. And I detest being patronized. For the people who do it seem never to realize that it is not me they are sparing, but themselves."

I stopped myself. It was necessary to think more clearly. It was so difficult to believe–. Well, and if she did not lie, did she not hurt me instead? Why had she insisted I "marry and raise children"? How those words stabbed me! Had I not wanted it for myself? And had I not been unable–stopped by something unworthy, perhaps impure in me?–And a moment later I was weeping in the lap of my beautiful friend. She did not promise to save me. She promised me nothing–but held me firmly, tenderly, as a woman ought. And I dreamed that she and I had words: "Grow to know me," I whispered. "I would like somehow to be near you." "I do not know what to do," she replied, "I am of two minds." And I felt her cool hand on my head. "Noelle–they say of love–who need it most can tolerate it least. I do not know if this is so, and yet I think it so. To dream of warmth, yet know not how to ask it, of pleasure, though it enlarge the likelihood of pain,–and when reality lets us from our dream–to dream regardless–mere pawns of circumstance–I praise flowers for responding blandly to the onset of frost. Noelle, I have never learned the sun–" I could not stop speaking, imagining. Thin flames ran under my skin–and I dreamed that she rose and faced me as a friend–showed me her eyes. And that I grew thick with fright. . . .

By the time Sunday arrived, I had so steeped myself in reverie that I had difficulty focusing my thoughts. I rose at six, breakfasted, and put my house in order. And having bathed and dressed myself by nine, I walked out into the warm, sunlit streets, content to allow pleasant thoughts to come to me involuntarily without the labor of my following or interpreting them. I imagined for the hundredth time living with Noelle, caring for her baby, cooking meals. Well, was it so absurd, so beyond possibility? If this were a sudden impulse or passion, if all I felt was this mutual attraction (I entitled myself to call it mutual), there would be no question of it being an absurd idea. But we were fast friends, we were both lonely, and had need of each other. Then I must broach it absolutely. "Noelle," I would say, "all my life I have longed for a friend I could trust. And now, for the first time, I have encountered in you just what I have been seeking. May we live together as friends? Study together? Keep house? I am a very orderly person–"

"Flowers for the pretty lady?" cried out an old flower vendor.

"A dozen yellow roses for my friend, please," I replied, and handed him my last dollar. . . .

By one forty-five, I had mounted Noelle's stairs and was about to ring the bell when I heard what I supposed was her playing on the pianoforte the closing strains of Beethoven's "Waldstein." She played gracefully and not without skill a piece I had thought deserving of greater passion, though I could not be sure. I listened through to the very end, paused a moment, then sounded the bell.

Throwing open the door, she greeted me in a frock of stiff yellow faille, with its own small jacket, which emphasized her lovely broad shoulders.

"Here!" I cried. "Yellow roses for your yellow frock!"

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"Why thank you, Clara! Look, Alex, roses!"

And stepping cautiously towards us was a tall, rather broad young man of about twenty-seven, with very thick blonde hair, and sharp little eyes lost in fat.

"So this is the young lady I've heard so much about," he exclaimed, his thin lips curling into what seemed an insolent smile.

"Yes," cried Noelle. "This is Clara! Clara, meet Dr. Sanus, who's joining us for lunch!"

Suddenly from his crib, the baby sneezed with his flat little nose.

"Alex, are you quite certain he's all right," cried Noelle, with what seemed an unpleasant trace of youthful coquetry. "Alex is Christopher's pediatrician," she explained, "and—"

"It seems to me," replied Alex, taking an otiose stance, "that if Christopher chooses to sneeze at the precise instant I'm being introduced to your generous friend, then he craves nothing less than a bit more attention—"

We all laughed. "How do you do, Clara?" he asked, displaying a set of even, pearl-like teeth.

"Fine, thank you."

"Alex was saying before—what were you saying, Alex—oh, the wine!" cried Noelle, scurrying into the kitchen.

"Only if it's chilled," warned the doctor, appraising me with a cold, steady gaze, that seemed leveled not exactly at me, but in some disturbing way, a little beyond me.

"Noelle tells me you are preparing to teach," he began, seating himself opposite me.

"Yes, that's right."

"Perhaps you'll forgive me—it's been a while since I've studied—but do you not think that scholarship has been dying lately with desks and classrooms, and students who come to digest their lunch?" These lines had been rehearsed.

"I don't—"

"Lunch!" interrupted Noelle, reentering with the wine. "Lunch will be ready shortly!"

"Do you not think," continued the young man, running his tongue over the rim of his slightly parted lips, "that we should not do better to learn in the open air like the Greeks?" There was something imperious in his character, as though he felt that he alone had the right to ask questions.

"It would seem to me," I replied, "climatic differences aside, that students might digest their lunches even better in the open air than in a classroom with desks."

"Yes, yes, of course," he conceded, "But I don't think you see my meaning—"

"Are you referring to specific schools?" I queried.

"Well, not exactly, but even in places like Harvard and Yale which are so lousy with the erudite and wise, there seems no longer to exist—in the humanities, that is—the true scholar, the dedicated—"

"Perhaps they do not exist because one does not perceive them; but those one *did* perceive—in the humanities, that is—might very well assert that science, for example, has never learned to sing."

"My word!" he exclaimed angrily. "That seems to me hopelessly woolly-headed."

Noelle interrupted nervously, "I, for one, agree with Alex. Why once in freshman English, my teacher demanded I revise the sentence: 'She sits among the cabbages and peas.' And when I wrote, 'She sits among the cabbages and leeks,'—do you know I received A-minus?"

Alex laughed, and remarked in the midst of our scholarly discussion upon the extreme humidity.

That he'd been attacking me I had no doubt, and though I parried his impertinences with ease, there arose in me a jealousy I could not contain; and since Noelle had particularly angered me by siding with him, I exclaimed a moment later that I was not especially hungry and begged to be excused from lunch. But vexed at my lack of zeal, she implored me to stay with an eagerness so disproportionate to the occasion, that I was forced to concede.

Alex rose and led us to the table.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

While eating with splendid appetite the baked chicken and brown rice that Noelle had prepared, Alex continued our discussion:

"You certainly will not deny that a young lady who shifts herself from an acting career to a life of scholarship is a subject of some interest. May I ask why you left the theater?"

"You may," I replied, "but you are unlikely to receive an honest answer on such short acquaintance." The wine gave me courage.

"And why may that be?"

"Because it is an area of some pain to me."

"Then you must not have been very successful."

"My dear man," I replied, with distinct annoyance, "you are discussing me like a child as though I were for eating."

"Oh hush up, both of you," cried Noelle. "My chicken is for eating."

"It's very tasty, Noelle," I said.

"I really do believe," said Alex, continuing to focus his gaze a little beyond me, "that if we trained ourselves in new patterns of behavior, such that we took one another more willingly into confidence, that our modern and so-called 'metaphysical isolation' would rapidly vanish."

"How do you mean?" I asked.

"Some people, for example," he replied, smiling at Noelle, "consider my prying a somewhat corrigible crime despite the fact that I risk their hostility. For upon reflection, such feeling on their part is in no way understandable—"

"I beg your pardon, Dr. Sanus, but are not all feelings understandable, and only some justifiable?"

"Yes, if you like," he conceded. "But Noelle and I, for example, who have known each other a mere two weeks, have become, because of our openness, like very old, one might say, dear friends."

Noelle sat with her head bowed and merely fidgeted with her food.

"I am very pleased for both of you," I replied quietly.

"And since Noelle speaks so often of you," he continued, "I consider it both my duty and my privilege to make myself warm up to you."

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"More rice?" asked Noelle quickly.

"Thank you," replied Alex, heaping on his plate a healthy portion. "In pediatrics," he continued, "I am presently treating a small epileptic boy—Simon by name—who, because of his resentment toward male authority figures, is particularly obnoxious to me."

"And do you express to him openly that response?" I inquired.

"How otherwise could he learn of his repellence?" replied the doctor, "Though just yesterday when he said to me, 'Only a very bad boy would want to jump on his doctor and step on him—isn't that so?'—I was cautious enough to reply, 'I think quite a good little boy might *think* he wanted to do such a thing, so long as he restrained himself.' "

"And if I told you I shared Simon's desire, would you praise me too?"

Noelle glared at me.

"So long as you did not act on it," replied Alex, smiling. "For there are ways of wanting things that can be communicated to others without harming them."

"In that case," I rejoined, "Simon and I both must learn that we must be especially good, that is, meek, in order not to be especially bad, that is, aggressive."

"Balderdash!" cried Alex. "I mean simply that we ought to possess the courage to express our feelings, as well as the responsibility to restrain those which are socially unacceptable. Furthermore," he went on, "having expressed to you simply and honestly, a desire to know you better, I must conclude that your responses are both exaggerated and morbid, and that you should think more simply."

"And you more deeply," I parried.

"I beg pardon?" His eyes were full on me now.

"Surely you don't think it possible to love the universal man and to despise one's neighbor!"

His lips positively twitched. "Oh I don't despise you," he replied in a conciliatory tone. "I simply prefer people who possess a greater degree of self-esteem."

"I must declare that rather superficial of you."

"In what regard?"

"I refer to little Simon who evokes and perceives your dislike. Should you, and those like you, instead of understanding his behavior, simply express your abhorrence of it, might that not injure his self-esteem to the extent of his growing into a neurotically obnoxious adult?"

"Ah, but he is a mere child now, who, despite my feelings, I am willing to help. Were he to grow into a neurotically obnoxious adult, I should have a perfect right to *both* ignore and dislike him."

"And would you have fools embrace madmen?"

"What is this talk of madmen?" shouted Noelle. "Who's mad? *You're* mad! You are both behaving abominably and spoiling my lunch!"

And with that Christopher began to cry. . . .

Having quieted her son, Noelle served us our icecream and honey in silence. After, when she allowed me to help her stack dishes in the kitchen, she said in a low voice:

"I'm furious with you."

"And not with Alex?"

"With Alex too!"

"Then you must forgive at least one of us," I replied, following her into the living room with coffee. Alex, who was thumbing through some music, suggested with forced gaiety that Noelle play for us.

"I'd rather not," she replied. "Not now."

"I think Noelle would like to drink her coffee," I suggested.

"I meant after coffee," snarled Alex. "Will you be disinclined then?" he asked her gently.

Noelle, remaining silent, displayed at that moment a capacity for withdrawing into herself that I had never seen before.

Pretending a yawn, Alex declared: "In that case, I shall drink up and leave you ladies to fonder enjoyments. I've some business I really must attend to."

And gulping quickly enough to scald himself, Alex rose majestically and said to Noelle:

"Thank you for a pleasant afternoon and a delicious lunch." And curtly to me: "Goodbye, Clara."

He let himself out.

Noelle, sitting in silence, stared into her coffee.

"Before you forgive me, you must tell me my fault," I said quietly, seating myself beside her.

"You have chased away my fellow," she accused, with a hectic flush on her pale cheeks.

"Your fellow?" I repeated. "He will come back."

She began to cry: "I wanted you to like him."

"I can't."

"Why?"

"Noelle," I exclaimed, "perhaps you exaggerate your ardent attraction to him. He is not worthy of you. He lacks the depth—. Such youthful arrogance, factitious chic!—I want to understand how such creatures are possible! No, I do not."

"You *could* not," she cried in a revenge of nerves. "You who are ashamed of everything good about yourself, yet think you are better than anyone else!—and such childish incompetence in you—just like Simon—proud of your destructiveness, positively proud—who are you to sit in judgment?"

I accepted her criticism without demur.

"I care for you, Noelle, as a friend," I said quietly. "I think he is cruel. I am your friend."

"Thank you very much for liking me," broke hotly from her, "but you are not telling the whole truth. Why don't you tell the truth? You are too intense with me, do you understand? You are like Simon—you just feel, you don't think. Think! You never think. What do you want of me?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"If I love you," I said softly, "why is it any of your business?"

Noelle stared at me with gloomy intensity.

"Are you really unnatural?" she asked.

And a flush of shame overcame my face.

"I am not unnatural," I whispered. "Only to be your

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friend. I want—a friend. Don't push me away. I can't stop myself from having dreams. I want nothing. Only a friend. Let me talk to you without feeling ashamed."

She rose quickly from the sofa and began to sob. And fluttering like a little girl after her mother, I drew her to me and embraced her so fiercely that she cried aloud in pain and terror.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

I frightened Noelle—my embrace frightened her—she cried and pushed me away. I was like Simon, she said—the enormity of my need repelled her—she pushed me away and walked abruptly past me—her skirt rustling. I remember her words: "You must not love me; it is a sin." Did she really say that? I cannot be sure. But: "You must not come here again and make me an upset." *That* she said, *that* I remember. And "Go away from me now."

Such thoughts crossed my mind as I walked the streets for hours afterward. At moments, waves of shame rooted me to the spot, and I stood still for several minutes unconscious of my surroundings. For some reason the sudden changes at street corners began to frighten me, and I felt incapable of coping with any sudden change of direction. I was totally unaware of things happening to the side of me. Eventually I walked only in stages, proceeding a few yards and then becoming motionless. I scanned the passers-by directly in front of me, and began to stare with strained attention at every object that met my eye. The shop window signs in particular I made myself read several times and memorize with such compulsiveness that I grew into a keen state of nervous excitement. And in a moment I became positively convinced that Noelle had totally misunderstood me. I must explain myself at once. I did not—did not love her romantically. She had judged me unjustly. How was I "unnatural"? I longed only to become her sister, her servant, her slave. Yes, I longed to be her slave that I might be welcome again in her home. I must tell her that. Surely she would pity me then, take me back. It would all come right. I had previously been unable to make my wants clear. Now she would know—I would tell all, embrace her with tears—. Embrace? No! And suddenly I grew rigid again with shame. My fault, my fault everything had gone wrong. But knowing I had done something bad, my excitement was such that I was unable to determine coherently what it was. I felt—only felt that a part of me was unclean and had to be eradicated. Then I fell to strange musings. . . .

Lonel is a pretty sound. Iness: contains sin and sine. Loneliness = the sine of my sin. It cloves the heavens. Though victimless I am guilty, and guilty, demand punishment. I'll climb the walls of my disgrace. But first I want some fish, do you understand? An especially salty kettle of tripe. And give me also a knife and fork. I am awfully fond of seemliness. What has Noelle to do with my love? She is only its object. Cook me a fish. The sky astride my shoulder is reality observed or malobserved, and who knows where the wind blows? Does the wind blow? Do seals masturbate in the snow? They want some fish, do you understand? Give them some fish. . . . I called her Idamama, sharp-boned and tall—I wanted her round and warm. But she held me close and I couldn't get warm, couldn't get warm: "Why do you shiver, *why*?" she screamed—that scream of folly unfair to my infancy when dead she screamed no more. . . . And wasting with long desire for the scrawny-bosomed Ida, I dreamed in a garden of moist black roses and slender tips of leaves of a grave lady, cool and gold, a precision in a forest a wherewithal ago. Oh my mother, dreams have darkened my soul. Never mind that. . . . What fit of flame in the shy snake's eye fists the wind in my mind? What damsel toys with her timbrel in the cold moonshine? Noelle? Are you what you seem? Listen—They cry shame on me, sing songs about me. But I have not earned this death. I sought it before my time. . . .Lonel is a pretty sound. Loneliness, the sine of my sin. . . . And should You pardon me in this, forgive me this wrong, how will You stand that I may lean, oh Lord, or close me as a leaf depends?. . . .

I approached the entrance to the park and saw, brightly lit, a maze of stars, crickets bleeding in the trees. A shadow passed over the moon. And ordinary colors, the foliage of the trees, the moonlight, dazzled me as though I were in an excess of light. I tried to stare at the moon without blinking, and at the same time feared that my eyes would be damaged by the light. I felt that I was perceiving things in a different way than ever before, and in my intense state of agitation, thought myself on the brink of some mystical discovery,—as though my imagination were endowed with truly cosmic powers, such that I could determine the movement of the moon, and, in accordance with my mood, the weather. I saw a lame swallow on a shining leaf dream to death quietly. It was warm; why did I shiver? There was stillness. And suddenly I hoped toward death.

I stared at the grass for several moments longing to lie in it. But I had to visualize my body in the new position before I could move it. With difficulty I let myself down into the grass and lay prone. If I stay here, I thought, I won't get up again until I die. This was my conscious thought. Yet beneath it loomed a despair that my conscious mind could scarcely perceive. Do you understand me? I was unable to feel, to want, to move—and embracing in my rigidity that stasis which seemed the rarest gift imaginable, I knew neither pleasure nor pain—only that stillness, that waking death, which shuts out time, whirl, mutability. I remember having the absurd thought that if anyone lived by counting each moment precious, he would end by counting, not by living. Despair grows comfortable when such thoughts pass through the mind without the intrusion of will. For the will winces shut. Discipline seeks its opposite. All rests. . . .

I must have stayed there rigid for several hours when it seemed suddenly that someone very slim came and lay on top of me. And the heat and weight of his body was sweet. At one point, when I tried to move, he disappeared for a moment. Then he returned and the same thing occurred. After a while, he got up and left. I do not believe that I was asleep. I do not believe that this was a dream.

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For in a moment sensation returned to me and I began shivering as though in a fever. I rose, trembling. I must go home, I thought. It's almost morning. But have I money for a subway ride? I reached in my purse and found a nickel change. But I wanted coffee and a donut too. No, I thought. Go home. As though in a daze, I found the exit to the park and walked the deserted streets toward the Lexington Avenue subway. . . .

Put your left foot in front of your right foot and walk me toward the train. I live on Hester Street—315 Hester Street—the big red door. If I see the baker downstairs, I'll say hello. Maybe he'll give me a donut. Pay him later. Two donuts with vanilla icing, please. Go upstairs. Make coffee with cream. I want my mother. Be quiet. Undress—sleep—dream. Coffee with cream. Not in hollow ease is she yet unremembered. Ride the subway first—if you have an urgent desire to talk to the dead, ride the subway. Are you laughing at me? Perhaps. Maybe the subway will be empty—nobody to talk to. Sit on your purse anyway so they don't rob you. Rob me of what? That's right. I never married because I like my last name too much. Okay. Everything growing dim again—as though less world outside my shadow. No. Shadow fastened to shadow dozing on the air. Stop. Pools of air... No!—think what you are doing. Leaning away from feelings again. Yes! Leaning away—I want to sleep. Later. I want to lie in the sun and sleep in the shade. Okay—think about something else. For the past few days the weather has been constantly changing with rain at night and a great to-do of clouds in the morning. That's good. What's good? Nothing. Sun's coming out now though. Yes. The sun tigergrips my throat. No! I'm thirty-two years old and I don't want to die. Don't. Die away dead afraid. Stop. Shrieks unsung. Shut up! Tomorrow I'll make my bed and eat a plum. Will you approve? Ha! Why do you laugh? I notice that you are constantly laughing at me. You're wrong. The world rests on the snap of a branch. Is that what you think? Do you suppose I think? No. Can I see Noelle later? No. Why? No—buy yourself a new dress. For whom should I smarten myself up? Buy it anyway. Do you resp. . .respect me? I might. I want more than donuts when I get home. I want a proper breakfast. Good. Cook me a proper breakfast. Okay. . . .

A tear fell on my cheek. I raised my hand and touched that tear.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Determined to pass with distinction my PhD comprehensives the August I broke with Noelle, I attribute to the necessity of study my main strength in averting what threatened to be the onset of an acute depression. As well, the exercise of swimming I took each day in the neighborhood pool, the wholesome food I made myself eat, and finally, the sheer strength of will—but why mention that? Would you think any the less of me had I lacked that strength? To go on: I managed to do as well as I had determined by examination time, so that by the middle of that especially balmy September, I had already begun to teach Latin at the City University. I published in the beginning of my career a few scholarly articles that won me the recognition of my colleagues whose casual friendships interrupted the monotony of my days. But for the most part, teaching took up my days, and books, my evenings—

Excuse me. I cannot go on. I received word from Dr. Findlater Smith that my x-rays are positive. Positive of what I can only surmise, but positive enough for him to reserve a room for me here at Memorial Hospital where I checked in last Friday. I know that I am incurable. I do not deceive myself.

Yes, for the past few days it is dying I've been doing.—a novel agony for which I know but one refuge: to talk with a dear friend. But lacking that friend, I invent in you one sentient enough to surmise my last confession: I write because I would rather do other things.

Forgive me if my death comes slow. It makes significant what I had hurried by. And lying on this pillow I look out the window and think so much about everything and everyone—all that I had hurried by. How my eyes run round this room! There isn't a spot on its walls I haven't studied. And I listen in the halls to everyone's conversations; I have become a regular gossip. My death is an omen of the bone. But the more clearly I perceive it, the more feverishly I want to live. Yet it seems at times that my mind is going blind. My eyes cannot decide the simplest sight; and I long passionately for sleep. Oh that my weakness passed, my strength arose,—I'd be a bird achieving—youth, life! May I ask you as my friend to give me that strength: burst this lethargy, stay with me a little?

*

June 3rd

On the dresser near my door is a bouquet of white chrysanthemums that Malachy brought me yesterday, together with an opened can of Leechie nuts. The nurses stop by my door, look in, smile, grab a nut. The Mexican orderly sloshes his mop over the floor. On the table by my bed is a full glass of grapefruit juice with a bent plastic straw. The breakfast tray has already come and gone and I have swallowed the two little black pills in my disposable paper cup. The night light has been turned off and my door is half opened. I would like simply to walk out of my heart.

June 4th

My foot upon the grave makes an effort toward conclusion. Will my death come slowly by degrees? Will it be a novel agony? And who will touch my head? Shall I live hereafter? In health it was more distinct. Enough! I am a gray-haired child come to dust. (Why do I express myself so peculiarly?) The sun shines through the pane. Appalling day! Gigantic sun!

In the garden outside my window, a fat gray cat is stalking a little lame bird. I feel afraid for the bird. . . .

I have not consented to this death. I feel instead a nervous desire for work. But I cannot settle down for excitement, and start to pace from one corner of my room to the other. I am as restless as a fish tossed up onshore.

This fierce, internal hunger, this nervousness is, God

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knows, unnatural for me. What a change from my former indisposition to do anything, my soporifical goodfornothingness, indifference to locality, over-all ossification. I yearned: oh for a vigorous toothache! Pain in life! Anything but that apathy. And now? Life has proved itself upon my pulse. At sixty-six, my heart's apprenticeship's begun.

The gray cat flattens—now he crawls—his jaws stir—twitching, hungry—for the little bird that does not see—that lifts its little throat in song—

Who invented this repose? This escape from circumstances and a name? No more to be lacked? No more to be known? Yet the maddest heart that God created—cannot object. Enough! I shall be sixty-six this July and expect to stay sixty-six for some years after that. A dead woman has no age, you know. To whom am I speaking? Has God a voice to break His silence? Must I believe in God? My faith cannot invent Him perfect. Heaven is astrew in me.

The fat gray cat has caught the little lame bird in its jaws. Stabs, mangles it. Its bill is clasped, eyes forsaken, feathers wilted low. The cat has caught the bird. The bird makes its punctual music—now shrieks—shrieks to God and sings—and louder sings. . . .The fledgling in the final bird mends agony to song. . . .

June 5th

Very early in the morning the hubbub begins—nurses and doctors moving about, walking, knocking—everyone getting up and readying for breakfast. If only everybody would sleep at night and be quiet—This never happens. They are forever moaning and complaining, and sometimes things go on that I am ashamed to describe.

I am growing as thin as a plucked chicken and feel very unwell today. I am feverish and shivering by turns. And my room feels stuffy. It has a decaying, acrid, sweetish smell. This morning I asked the nurse to draw up the window curtain and open the shutters. I wanted to see daylight, sunshine. But the day was sad and melancholy. There was no sun. The clouds covered the sky with a shroud of mist. It was rainy, overcast, mournful. It seemed to me a day without light.

June 6th

Malachy came to visit me today. He came and went. Simple Malachy, my simple soul. We spoke seldom and with soft voices. "Are you in pain," he asked. "Just a little"—and having too much tact to attempt to console me, he offered me a chocolate. "No," I said, "but you have one." He wore his mailman's uniform. "Let's talk while there's still time," I said. And he, "I'll not have ya talkin'." Then he bent down his face and held it low so long, I said, "What are you thinking?" "I'm lonesome for you all the time," he replied. Soon he will be more lonesome still. There is a gentle lady in heaven whose pity is aroused by—. "Have a chocolate," he said. "I bought them for you." And we ate. We ate together.

June 7th

It's a strange thing: remembering the past is painful yet sometimes the memories seem pleasant to me. Even what was ugly, what I despised at the time, becomes purified from ugliness in my memory and presents itself as beautiful to my imagination. That is due to nothing but foolish, excessive warmth of heart . . . . I am growing over-ardent from solitude.

June 8th

The man occupying the room next to mine is such a pitiful, decrepit figure. Samuel is his name. I sometimes visit him in his room. His knees shake, his hands shake, his head shakes, from some illness, I suppose. And he is timid, afraid of everyone, even the orderlies. I am shy at times, but he is a great deal worse. Last night I heard him sobbing so quietly, so pitifully, that it was heart-rending. And thoughts of him haunted me all night.

June 9th

Across the hall from me is a child of about eleven, a sad, brooding child. I don't like it when children brood, it's painful to see. I peeked into her room today. A ragdoll was lying on the floor beside her. She did not play with it; she stood without stirring. I offered her one of Malachy's chocolates. She took it but she did not eat it.

June 10th

I want my father now to comfort me—to make the parting tranquil. How strange! I want the privilege of his eyes. Excuse me. I see his eyes, twin stars. I grow quiet at the name of love. Perhaps he never loved me. If he had ever fully loved me—oh God, let me stop. I'd outbabble the very swallows—stop!

June 11th

The moon leaks red on Nobodaddy in the garden. A leaf depends.

June 12th

I cannot tell you today what is within me. My speech would stagger. Or I'd speak much and come short. . . . Release me from what I long for to something that I have! Mother of my mortal heart, come!

June 13th

Death bless itself in me, pluck sorrow from its root.

June 14th

I want to hold that little child across the hall from me. I want to hold Samuel. I want to hold them. Flesh, not words. I want to hold them.

How rude of me to sob! I ought to laugh! When have I ever cherished this life? And now that it will soon be over—yes, I am convinced that it will soon be over. . . .terribly the forgotten anguish comes.

June 15th

Last night I visited Samuel in his room. He lay still for a bit, then turned around, and tried to say something. "Pardon?" I asked. But he did not answer. I waited a little. He's sleeping, I thought, so I went back to my room. An

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hour later I came back and saw that he had not awakened, and was lying the same way I had left him. Again I thought he was asleep, so I just sat with him for half an hour, lost in thought. I myself do not remember what I was thinking, except it was not of him. But suddenly I was roused by a feeling of uneasiness; I was struck by the death-like silence in the room. . . .I looked at the bed and saw that Samuel was lying in the same position. I went over to him, pulled down his covers, and touched him. He was already cold—he was dead. Samuel was dead, he had died suddenly. I cannot tell you just what—but the pity of it, the pity of it. . .

June 16th

There are no words for what I have to say. If I opened my lips, I would simply howl like an animal.

June 17th

I lie here and think and grow old faster as the time passes. I am so weak. I feel—I know that I shall soon die. And in a strange place. How queer! I would prefer to die in the corner I am used to. It's better somehow where one is used to being even though one spends half one's time grieving, still it is better. I used to have moments when I was glad to be alone with no one to share my grief. But now—it is dull for me alone.

June 18th

I don't want them to throw earth upon me and go away and leave me alone.

June 19th

I want to write today, but I don't know how to begin. I don't know how what I have written so far came to be written. But I haven't the strength now to talk of my past; I don't even want to think of it. Beside, what can I tell you more of love, my friend? Always it was the same—someone distant, unattainable. But why did they never love me? You must tell me please

Tell me please. Speak to me.

I wonder, do your lips curl in anger when you think you are feeling love? Mine do. That's because I am always angry.

I am angry. Speak to me.

In the last few minutes I have grown somewhat stiff in my body. It is difficult to move my pen. I love you. Give me your cross and I will give you my star.

This morning I said to Nurse Reilly, "Nurse, I want to sleep." "Then sleep," she answered. I told her she was pretty. "So are you," she said. I began to cry. Do you think she likes me?

June 20th

My thoughts are sorrowful, but my heart is glad. I hesitate to explain the feeling of joy I have within me—a light, pleasant quiver. It is dying I am doing. Yet I am as excited as a child about to go on a journey. . . .

There's something quieter than sleep within this quiet room. □

THOMAS JAMES

NO MUSIC

In here, a name is unimportant.
You leave it behind you like a set of dentures.
It grows so far away from you it is impossible
To mouth its syllables with any kind of conviction.
It grows mild and faded as a row of stitches.

The dead have such sweet breath.
They are entirely indifferent to their surroundings,
Too wrapped up in themselves to notice anything—
A fly investigates the pearly knuckle.
Daylight withers, effacing its muscularity.

Children die with their hands stretched out,
Reaching for something they can recognize;
They move into the dusk without even thinking.
And the old fill their lungs with it like sleep
Or the tender odors of a burning field.

Flowers brighten the edges. You grow into yourself
Till it is difficult to imagine what you are thinking.
Hands folded for the occasion, you are nearly flawless.
They have shut your eyes, so that their dark alarm
Flickers behind the two white lids.

Once, I stood alone in a solid wave,
Which took my entire body in its arms.
It wrapped me like a wave of terrible sleep.
Alone down there my skin grew thick as stone.
I sank. I could not breathe the stony air.

Now you bob on a surface of white flowers—
They stand still, but seem to drift in your direction.
They are white as the palm of a hand. They tell me
nothing.
You lose color as they begin to mount the walls,
Gathering their stamina like a pale fungus.

It is impossible to move in all that white.
Your face is a blossom thickening to anonymity,
Erasing its features in a surge of downiness.
One dark hand buds and loses its distinction.
The light bruises and steps out of the room.

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"How We Failed to Wipe Everyone Out by 1971 (and Other Information)"

vs.

"Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Northern States Power . . ."

Which Side Am I Supposed to Be On?

By Leo J. Hertzel

The nation's growing need for electrical power and the means by which that need will or can be met are problems of enormous complexity. Scientists, utility corporations, federal agencies, concerned citizens, state agencies and conservation minded organizations like the Sierra Club have interests in the problems, but the interests are frequently conflicting.

"There is no energy policy in this country," former Interior Secretary Stewart Udall was recently quoted. "There is no one tending the store because there is no store."

The bewildering confusion of charges and responses, judgments attacked and upheld, propaganda claims, public relations gimmicks, concerned and reliable authorities contradicting other concerned and reliable authorities, overlapping areas of state and federal regulatory powers, all concerning the question of electric power and its sources are melded in the conflict that has raged since late in 1965 over Northern States Power Company's Monticello, Minnesota, nuclear power plant. Because of legal implications in this conflict—*does the state or the federal government regulate radioactive discharges by nuclear power plants?*—Monticello is almost certain to be a battleground of national importance in the future of America's power supply. But the truths and the benefits and the dangers of Monticello and nuclear power are not easy to unravel. Even a simplified summary of the facts becomes extremely complex.

December, 1965

Northern States Power Company (NSP) of Minneapolis decides that a new generating plant in the 500-megawatt class is needed to keep abreast of its increasing power needs.

July-August, 1966

NSP submits an application to the Atomic Energy Commission for a construction permit for a plant and signs a contract with General Electric for the construction of a boiling water nuclear reactor power plant (see diagram, page 45) approximately three miles north of Monticello, Minnesota.

Monticello is a town of about 1,600, set in flat, Dakota-like plains thirty-five miles north and west of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Monticello rests on the banks of the Mississippi River, but the town does not get its drinking water from the river but rather from deep wells. The Mississippi River flows from Monticello through the heart of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Minneapolis gets its water supply from the river; Saint Paul gets some of its water from the river. The Monticello nuclear plant will use Mississippi river water in its operations and, providing everything goes according to plan, will regularly discharge a small amount of radioactive material into the river. The amount to be discharged, providing everything goes according to plan, is well within standards of emission set by the Atomic Energy Commission. The plant will also regularly emit small amounts of radioactive substances into the air from its stack. These emissions, providing everything goes according to plan, will also be well within limits of safety set by the Atomic Energy Commission. It is common for winds to blow from the northwest in Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

One fact that seems to have affected NSP's decision to build a nuclear plant and to put it in the Monticello area is that NSP has been under severe criticism from environmental groups because discharges from fossil fuel plants are apparently polluting scenic recreational areas, notably on the Saint Croix River. There is nothing scenic or particularly recreationally attractive about Monticello or its surroundings.

June, 1967

General Electric begins actual construction of the Monticello plant. NSP carries on a careful education-indoctrination plan (meetings with civic groups, illustrated lectures), apparently convincing Monticello's citizens that the plant is absolutely safe and clean and furthermore it will do wonders for the local tax base. (According to Donald O.

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Smith, who became editor of the weekly Monticello *Times* several years later, the townspeople's attitude toward the $100 million plant was "*Welcome!*")

July-August, 1968 to May, 1969

Dean E. Abrahamson, associate professor of anatomy, laboratory medicine, and physics at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and President of the Minnesota Committee for Environmental Information (MCEI), and other concerned citizens and organizations raise questions in Minneapolis about emergency safety factors at the Monticello plant. They are also concerned about the effects on plant and animal life (humans included) of prolonged exposure to low level radioactive materials, the discharges into the water and air at Monticello. Partly as a result of this outcry from scientists, laymen, and environmental organizations, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), a state agency created by the state legislature in 1967, decides to set its own standards for safe radioactive emission at Monticello and elsewhere in the state.

The MPCA hires an independent consultant, scientist Dr. E. C. Tsivoglou of the Georgia Institute of Technology, to review the matter and make recommendations on acceptable levels of radioactive emissions at Monticello and elsewhere in the state. Dr. Tsivoglou, who soon becomes known as "the rambling Czech from Georgia Tech," asks for advice from various sources.

On February 8, 1969, Professor Abrahamson, as president of MCEI, submits his organization's recommendations to MPCA. His letter accompanying the recommendations says in part,

> Neither MCEI nor its technical members have any interest in promoting the use of reactors, nor in preventing the use of reactors, nor in preventing their construction for electric power generators. The essence of our philosophy and approach is that public issues that have scientific components can be resolved in a democracy only when the citizenry and their elected or appointed representatives have access to the best available scientific information presented in an explicit and objective manner—unencumbered by political, economic or moral judgments.
>
> . . . .
>
> These public issues have a strong moral, social and political content, and with respect to these questions scientists and engineers do not necessarily have superior judgment. In today's society decisions on major public issues cannot be maintained for any length of time by those with decision-making power unless they are supported by a prevailing public opinion. In recognition of this fact, a great deal of manipulation of public opinion is going on everywhere, and it is an accepted custom that every large business or government unit indulges in a considerable amount of public relations effort to create an opinion climate favorable to its growth.

The MCEI apparently wants more open debate, less propaganda. It is not content to allow "specialists" to make decisions on proposals like Monticello; somehow the general public should have a say in matters with such far-reaching consequences.

The essence of MCEI's accompanying report or recommendation is one sentence, "The clearest fact that emerges from these discussions is the uncertainty, the experimental nature of the nuclear program."

In May, the MPCA approves a Monticello discharge permit based on Dr. Tsivoglou's recommendations. According to one source at NSP, "In general terms, the radioactivity recommendations are 50 times more stringent than those of the AEC. . . ." According to Dr. Charles Carson, Director of Special Services, MPCA, "The MPCA over-all allowance standards are 100,000 times smaller than the AEC's." According to a table released by NSP several years later (see page 46) in some cases MPCA standards are over one-million times more strict than AEC standards.

August, 1969

NSP institutes legal action seeking a declaratory judgment by the courts that MPCA lacks authority to regulate activities at Monticello. In effect this raises the question of whether AEC (the federal government) or MPCA (the state government) has jurisdiction in the matter.

October 10, 11, 1969

Two agencies of the University of Minnesota combine to sponsor a "Symposium on Nuclear Power and the Public". Participants include spokesmen for General Electric, the AEC, environmental protection groups, and concerned scientists from a variety of universities. The bound proceedings of the symposium weigh approximately five pounds, but the evidence presented and the conclusions drawn are as contradictory as the other evidence and conclusions being hurled back and forth in the controversy.

"While there are ambiguities, inconsistencies, and perhaps even deficiencies in the AEC regulations, they are adequate to protect public health," Merril Eisenbud, Administrator, Environmental Protection Administration, City of New York, tells the group.

"In summary, as a member of the scientific community and as a member of the public at large, I view the burgeoning nuclear power industry with a great deal of anxiety. My impression is that these power plants should be designed so as to approach absolute containment of the radioactivity," says Arthur R. Tamplin of the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, Livermore, California.

Representative Craig Hosmer (R-California) quotes for the symposium part of a letter from H. J. Dunster, Deputy Division Head, United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority to Doctor Tsivoglou regarding his recommended standards of permissible radiation to the MPCA. ". . . . your proposals seem somewhat extreme and could certainly not be related to the recommendations of ICRP."

"Somehow the means must be found to compel the experts to deal with these problems in a more common, less rarefied atmosphere and in a vocabulary more easily translated into the language of ordinary political discourse. This can be accomplished by injecting into the AEC licensing process a healthy dose of controversy and adverseness," says Harold P. Green of The George Washington

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"In the past, the risks taken in the name of technological progress—boiler explosions on the first steamboats, or the early injuries from radium—were restricted to a small place and a short time. The new hazards are neither local nor brief. Air pollution covers vast areas. Fallout is worldwide. Synthetic chemicals may remain in the soil for years. Radioactive pollutants now on the earth's surface will be found there for generations, and, in the case of carbon-14, for thousands of years. Excess carbon dioxide from fuel combustion eventually might cause floods that could cover much of the earth's present land surface for centuries. At the same time the permissible margin for error has become very much reduced. In the development of steam engines a certain number of boiler explosions were tolerated as the art was improved. If a single comparable disaster were to occur in a nuclear power plant or in a reactor-driven ship near a large city, thousands of people might die and a whole region be rendered uninhabitable—a price that the public might be unwilling to pay for nuclear power. The risk is one that private insurance companies have refused to underwrite. Modern science and technology are simply too powerful to permit a trial-and-error approach."

—Barry Commoner, *Science and Survival*

"We can state unequivocally, and without fear of contradiction, that no one has ever produced evidence that any specific amount of radiation will be without harm. Indeed, quite the opposite appears to be the case.

"It came as a great shock to us, in the course of our study of radiation hazards to man, that nuclear electricity generation has been developed under the false illusion that there exists some safe amount of radiation. This unsupportable concept is surely one of the gravest condemnations of nuclear electricity generation. Obviously any engineering development proceeding under an illusion of a wide margin of safety is fraught with serious danger."

—John Gofman and Arthur Tamplin, *Poisoned Power*

"If the average exposure of the U.S. Population were to reach the allowable 0.17 rads per year average, there would, in time, be an excess of 32,000 cases of fatal cancer plus leukemia per year, and this would occur year after year."*

—John Gofman and Arthur Tamplin, *in a report presented to the Institute for Electrical and Electronic Engineers in San Francisco, October 29, 1969, and later reprinted in their books*

**A "rad" is a measure of radiant energy absorption. A substance is said to receive 1 rad of radiation when it absorbs a given amount of energy per gram of the substance. It is the Federal Radiation Council that sets the standard of 0.17 rads per year as "safe" for Americans.*

University. Concerned with the fact that the AEC both *regulates* and *promotes* the use of atomic power, so that in a sense it is its own judge, he urges that some system be set up to allow third parties to enter into the licensing of atomic facilities. "In addition, perhaps our state governments ought to play a more critical, skeptical, and active role in AEC licensing cases than they have in the past. In this connection, the present litigation involving the newly established Minnesota radiation standards applicable to the Northern States Power Company's Monticello nuclear power plant is a healthy and constructive development in that it focuses attention on a problem heretofore largely ignored."

"There are those who believe present limits on releases are too liberal when viewed in comparison with the even lower levels that reactors are capable of achieving as shown by operating experience. We fully agree that, within radiation protection guides, exposures to the public should be kept as 'low as practicable.' However, the point at which 'as low as practicable' has been achieved is always a matter of degree and involves judgment. . . . A major consideration in developing such criteria and standards is whether the degree of reduction in risk to the public by a regulatory requirement justifies the measures that may be required by both the regulatory agency and the licensee to implement the requirement," James T. Ramey, Commissioner of the AEC, tells the symposium. Pointing out that there are fifty thousand deaths a year in automobile accidents and about two thousand deaths a year in aircraft accidents, he argues that some risk is present in all activity and we must weigh the benefits against the risks.

The symposium is enlightening even if it only succeeds in making clear the incredible confusion and conflicting judgments by the "experts" on the question of low-level radioactivity.

August-December, 1970

Efforts by MPCA, MECCA, Clean Air, Clean Water Unlimited, and other groups to force NSP to stop activity at the plant site continue. Efforts are made by Minnesota Attorney General Head to convince AEC that it should not grant an NSP September request to operate the plant at 88 percent of its capability.

On December 22 U. S. District Court Chief Judge Edward J. Devitt rules that the federal government (thus the AEC) has exclusive right to regulate nuclear generating facilities. Put another way, the decision amounts to a statement that the State of Minnesota (MPCA and Dr. Tsivoglou's recommended standards) has no right to interfere with operation of the Monticello plant as long as the company has a permit from the AEC. The State of Minnesota appeals the decision.

December 24, 1970

The AEC issues a provisional operation license for the Monticello plant allowing it to operate to levels up to 500 megawatts, or approximately 88 percent of capacity.

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February 18, 1971

The AEC authorizes operation of the Monticello plant at full power.

March 5, 1971

Electricity from the Monticello plant is phased into the NSP system for the first time.

June, 1971

The AEC proposes to lower its long-standing limits on permissible releases of radiation. Hearings are scheduled, but because of technical and legal difficulities, they will be put off until sometime in 1972.

According to Dr. Charles Carson of MPCA, if the proposed new AEC standards are put into effect they will be only about one-hundred times greater than the MPCA standards.

July 14, 1971

A release of radiation considerably above the normal operating levels occurs at the Monticello plant. The release reaches a level of 20,000 microcuries per second from the reactor building vent stack and 35,000 microcuries per second from the main stack. According to the NSP report submitted to the AEC, these were average levels released over a period of 30 minutes. Lesser amounts were released over longer periods.

According to an independent meteorological review of the release, "With the instability present (unsettled weather conditions), the effluent even from the stack would likely be brought to the ground a kilometer or so from the plant." Winds at the time were blowing from the west-southwest.

A later comment by Peter A. Morris, Director, Division of Reactor Licensing, AEC, notes of this incident, "The liquid activity in the discharge canal reached 2.5 x 10^{-6} uCi/cc, possibly exceeding the limits of 10 CFR Part 20". In simpler language, this discharge possibly exceeded the safety limits established by the AEC for the plant.

October 18, 1971

Peter A. Morris of the AEC sends a letter to NSP regarding the operation of the Monticello plant. The letter begins,

> In reviewing the operation record of the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant since the provisional operating license No. DPR-22 was issued, we note that there have been a number of unusual occurrences that have had safety implications. The handling or resolution of many of these items does not appear to have been adequate, which leads us to conclude that your Operations Committee and Safety Audit Committee have not functioned properly in discharging their responsibility to assure the high level of operational competence required.

The final paragraph of the letter (which details a number

"The authors (Gofman and Tamplin) give only a brief justification of their basic scientific premise—that 'legally permitted radiation doses' will ultimately result in 32,000 extra deaths a year from cancer and leukemia in the United States. This premise is based on one obvious error and a number of pessimistic assumptions, unsupported or positively discouraged by published evidence. . . ."

—H. J. Dunster, *former Chairman of the International Council on Radiological Protection's committee on radiation standards,* Nuclear Engineering *(a U.K. journal) January/February, 1971*

"It would be ironic if the first nation to drop a nuclear bomb on another nation should itself be destroyed by its own radioactive products."

—Dr. Charles Carson, *Director of Special Services, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minneapolis*

"The most significant difference between nuclear wastes and those of other industries is that nuclear wastes are radioactive, and this accounts for the special methods required for their disposal. The highly radioactive wastes from spent nuclear fuels, in particular, pose a challenging problem. They cannot be piled in open fields or dumped into rivers or the ocean. Another problem exists because of the millions of gallons of water containing traces of radioactivity that must be disposed of each year. The management of radioactive wastes is, indeed, a complex and interesting activity."

"LOW-LEVEL WASTES have a radioactive content sufficiently low to permit discharge to the environment with reasonable dilution or after relatively simple processing."

—Radioactive Wastes, *one of the AEC's "Understanding the Atom" series of booklets*

"The AEC's answer for controlling low level radioactive waste pollution through dilution in rivers is simply wrong. No matter how much you dilute it, that stuff doesn't go away. It builds up and accumulates in a lot of ways and you can't prevent it from doing that. It gets in the food chain. It stays around for years. The only answer, in the case of nuclear power plants, is to build absolutely clean plants, plants that emit no radiation whatsoever. Until they can be made absolutely clean, they should be shut down. Let them make the Monticello plant absolutely clean or shut it down. There are no other alternatives."

—Howard Vogel, *Legal Chairman, Minnesota Environmental Control Citizens Association (MECCA)*

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of "unusual occurrences" at Monticello) includes the following statement: ". . . we conclude that additional management attention is necessary to assure safe operation of the Monticello plant."

The contents of this letter are not brought to the public's attention until December 2 when the letter is presented at a meeting of the St. Paul Environmental Quality Advisory Board by Russell Hatling, a member of MECCA. Hatling tells the board that the letter was spotted in the AEC's Monticello file in Washington by a "friend" of MECCA.

According to Bob Goligoski, staff writer for the Saint Paul *Dispatch*, in a front page news story after contents of the letter are disclosed,

> "An NSP spokesman explained today that NSP has been keeping the AEC's compliance division fully informed of plant operations. Apparently Morris' department has not kept in touch with the compliance division (of the AEC).
>
> "He said the company has taken actions to prevent another 'July 14' incident from occurring. . . .
>
> "Somewhat ironically, one day after the Morris letter was sent to NSP, the AEC compliance office in Chicago informed the company that its investigation of the July 14 incident revealed that NSP was in total compliance with federal regulations."

November 2, 1971

The Greater Metropolitan Federation of Minneapolis, a coalition of 95 social-action groups, charges that NSP's Monticello plant was shut down two-thirds of the time during its first six months of operation. Further, the federation charges that an NSP report to the AEC discloses "two very serious and alarming incidents" involving radioactive releases during the first six months; however, these releases were not reported to the MPCA or to the public. Mrs. Judith Healey, chairman of the federation's NSP Pollution Committee, is quoted in the Minneapolis *Tribune* as saying that the Monticello plant's thirty-three shutdowns in the six month period total 3,036 hours and indicated that the plant was "not really ready to be operated at all."

In response to these charges, NSP Vice President Leo Wachter is quoted as saying that the six month period under discussion (December 1970 to June 1971) was a "shakedown" phase and that during a shakedown phase for a power plant a two-thirds "down time" is not abnormal. In response to the charges of two "very serious and alarming incidents" at the plant, the *Tribune* quotes Don Bohn, NSP's supervising environmental engineer, as saying that the highest emission during the two incidents was 90 curies. "If this were received 24 hours daily for a year by a man standing at the most vulnerable spot on the plant boundary, he would receive an increase of less than 1 percent above the natural background radiation."

November 7, 1971

Monticello citizens, led by the Chamber of Commerce, hold "Community Appreciation Day" to honor NSP. "Highlights of Community Appreciation Day included the presentation of a bronze commemorative plaque to NSP, the appearance in Monticello of several state politicians and presentation to NSP of a large, specially-decorated cake in the design of the Monticello Nuclear Plant," says the Monticello *Times* November 11 front page story. "Also at the plant site, the Monticello American Legion Post presented NSP with a United States flag which was raised at the beginning of the ceremony. Because of security restrictions and space limitations at the nuclear plant site, attendance had to be by invitation only. . . ," the story continues.

November 12, 1971

The Monticello plant is shut down for what NSP calls, "maintenance." Part of the maintenance involves installing some redesigned parts recommended by the AEC as additional safety measures.

November 14, 1971

Technicians working with acetylene torches within the plant ignite a flash fire, apparently caused by a pocket of gas in the "off-gas loop seal pipe." No serious damage occurs; however, the level of radioactive emission from the stack increases, but NSP technicians quickly point out that the increased rate of emission is really smaller than the normal emission rate when the plant is in full operation.

November 19, 1971

Maintenance inspections at the plant disclose that baffles have come loose in the drywell torus of the plant. The "torus" is a huge doughnut-shaped container at the base of the reactor; its function is to hold a very large amount of water—approximately 500,000 gallons—as a heat sink to condense steam into water. According to NSP officials, "The torus water, because of its contact with reactor steam, picks up over a period of time small amounts of radioactivity."

In order for workmen to repair the baffles, the torus must be emptied—emptied of 500,000 gallons of water that is radioactive; however the level of radioactivity is quite low. Using every available storage facility at the plant—including space normally used for operating purposes (250,000 gallons of the torus water are stored in the steam condenser, which the company describes as "a large shell which ordinarily contains steam from the reactor while the steam is being cooled back into water")—the company is able to store all but 42,000 gallons of the torus water. It is necessary to do something with this remaining water so that workmen can get inside the torus to repair the baffles. The decision is made to dump 10,000 gallons of the torus water into the Mississippi River immediately, and an additional 30,000 gallons during the following four or five days.

According to MPCA reports the following things occur:

4:30 PM NSP officials notify MPCA officials of

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the situation at Monticello and their intention of dumping 10,000 gallons of radioactive water into the Mississippi River that night. MPCA officials request further information and ask NSP for more information on the level of radioactivity of the water before discharging begins.

8:00 PM NSP officials notify MPCA officials that discharge of the water has already begun. NSP assures MPCA that the radioactive levels are within the limits set by the MPCA

November 20, 1971

MPCA notifies the Health Department of the radioactive discharge at Monticello. This is the first time the Health Department has heard of the matter. The Health Department decides to shut down the Minneapolis water intakes on the Mississippi River as a precautionary measure. After making calculations on the rate of flow of the river, the department decides to shut its intake from 6:00 PM November 21 to 4:00 AM November 22. It is calculated that during this period of time the 10,000 gallons of Monticello low level radioactive discharge will pass through the river in Minneapolis and go on downstream.

November 21, 1971

MPCA officials request NSP to refrain from dumping any more of the radioactive water into the river until such time as MPCA can run tests on the water.

The NSP plant at Monticello discharges approximately 10,000 gallons of very low level radioactive water into the river. This discharge and the three that follow are not as highly radioactive as the first. The lower level is achieved at Monticello by exchanging torus water with "cleaner" water stored in a pool eventually to be used to store spent fuel elements after they have been removed from the reactor and are awaiting shipment to a reprocessing facility. (Since this pool has not yet been used, the plant being new, the water in it is relatively "clean"; however should such an emergency occur in the future after the pool has been used to store spent fuel, no such exchange could take place because water in the pool will have become much more radioactive.)

November 22, 1971

The NSP plant at Monticello discharges approximately 10,000 gallons of radioactive water into the river. The radioactive level of the water is similar to that of the discharge of the preceding day.

The Minnesota Health Department learns that due to "incorrect information" on the river flow the November 19 radioactive discharge had actually flowed through the city long before the intakes were closed. The Health Department assures the public that due to the low levels involved, there is no cause for alarm. Frederick Heisel,

The On-Going Background of Attack and Defense

NOTE: The following summary of charges and counter-charges is not meant to be all-inclusive nor is it necessarily given in a chronological order. It is simply a small part of the verbal background of the Monticello dispute between NSP and its critics; one must remember that during these exchanges, claims, and counter-claims, workmen continued to build the plant at Monticello and eventually technicians put the plant into operation.

October, 1968–January, 1972

A continuing war of words, spoken and printed, goes on as NSP and its friends stand against a rising tide of public sentiment: fear. What are the dangers of low level radiation over a prolonged period of time? Is there danger of an accident at Monticello—possibly affecting all of Minneapolis and Saint Paul? Minnesota Environmental Control Citizens Association (MECCA) is formed in Minneapolis and becomes NSP's most outspoken opponent. A spokesman for MECCA describes the organization as "an environmental lobby." A kind of Mother's Day march is organized to dramatize the dangers of low level radiation to the human embryo and fetus. Articles like "NSP AEC PCA and You" appear in the *Twin Citian* urging the public to rise up and demand that NSP respond to the possible dangers.

NSP replies with reassuring television commercials and handouts like a glossy illustrated brochure entitled "Electric power from the atom at Northern States Power Company's Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant", sixteen colorful pages that assure the public, "Environmental monitoring analyzes and traces the waste to make sure there are no problems."

MECCA and others counter with quotes from *Science and Survival* by Barry Commoner:

> *In the development of steam engines a certain number of boiler explosions were tolerated as the art was improved. If a single comparable disaster were to occur in a nuclear power plant or in a reactor-driven ship near a large city, thousands of people might die and a whole region be rendered uninhabitable—a price that the public might be unwilling to pay for nuclear power. The risk is one that private insurance companies have refused to underwrite. Modern science and technology are simply too powerful to permit a trial-and-error approach.*

NSP distributes copies of an article titled "What We *Do* Know About Low Level Radiation" by Lauriston S. Taylor, President, National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements—a highly respected, independent scientific body that has been in existence in one form or another since 1929. The organization is one of several that advises the AEC on safety standards and radiation questions. Generally, Taylor's paper is reassuring, suggesting there is

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really no available information to indicate that very low level radiation exposure is harmful. However, two paragraphs are disturbing to some citizens; the thinking in these paragraphs will later be re-stated by spokesmen for the AEC.

> *As a consequence of this type of judgment which must enter into the setting of dose limits, some kind of comparison should be made with other causes of death. One should also consider what possible benefits could accrue to the population as a whole, or to a large segment of the population, or even to the single individual during his lifetime.*
>
> *There is, of course, no way of accomplishing this—in any real sense. The National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP) has been studying this problem for over a decade and so also has the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP). Various devices have been tried, to establish some kind of a quantitative basis for decision making for dose limits in this very low dose region. Thus far the decisions have resulted from the collective judgment of these and other bodies involving several hundred experienced scientists who have set the levels and the conditions where they are today.*
>
> *In the meantime, I would emphasize again, that, if in the future—probably not less than a few decades from now—it were found that the dose limits have been set needlessly high, the proportion of the population exposed to them would still be so small that even statistically the number of deaths, if any, would be undetectable. I have to say, with some caution, that even though miniscule, unless the "deaths" can be avoided by reasonable means, without offsetting benefits in other directions, they should probably be considered as acceptable when compared to the effects of all other environmental agents. This is a question of extreme delicacy, but it is the root of the whole problem of setting radiation protection standards.*

The "Greater Metropolitan Federation" distributes a high-quality colorful brochure called "THE UTILITY PRIMER or everything you always wanted to know about NORTHERN STATES POWER, but they were afraid to tell". The brochure includes the following "lesson" to be learned:

> *LESSON 6: Health*
> *For your Public Health,*
> *observe these safeguards.*
>
> *1. Do not drink any water (Monticello is on the Mississippi, you know) after a nuclear accident.*
>
> *2. Do not breathe any air that is downwind of a nuclear plant during or after an accident.*
>
> *3. Do not have any babies downwind of a nuclear plant during or after a nuclear accident.*

The NSP distributes a high-quality colorful brochure called, "HOW WE FAILED TO WIPE EVERYONE OUT BY 1971 (and other information)." Page two of this brochure is a reproduction of a child's letter to the company, scrawled on yellow lined paper.

director of the department's environmental health section, assures the public that the increase in radiation from the first discharge was "less than one-tenth of one percent above the natural radiation in the water."

November 23, 1971

The NSP plant at Monticello discharges approximately 10,000 gallons of radioactive water into the river. The radioactive level of the water is similar to that of the discharge of the preceding day.

November 24, 1971

The NSP plant at Monticello discharges approximately 10,000 gallons of radioactive water into the river. The radioactive level of the water is similar to that of the discharge of the preceding day.

Mr. Grant J. Merritt, Executive Director of MPCA, writes a letter to Mr. Robert H. Engels, President of NSP, saying in part, "We need to know more about what is happening at the plant with respect to any potential effluents . . . . In the future, I request that we be informed far enough in advance of a release that we still have time to obtain a sample, complete an analysis of it, and discuss it in full with the Department of Health, long before NSP feels that they must make the release."

Howard Vogel, chairman of MECCA's legal task force, holds a press conference and requests Governor Wendell Anderson to close down the Monticello plant and to commission a study of the effects of low-level radiation on humans. He tells reporters that the AEC and the Environmental Protection Agency also are being asked to shut down the plant. In asking for a study of the effects of low level radiation, Vogel said, ". . . it is imperative that until the results of such a study are made known and have been fully discussed by the public that Monticello be closed down as a potential public nuisance."

The MECCA request is endorsed by the Greater Metropolitan Federation.

The governor's office is quoted as saying that the governor will have no comment until he feels he has all the facts.

(At the time of MECCA's request, of course, the Monticello plant is not operating. Work is going on in the torus and the plant will not resume operations for approximately ten weeks.)

December 17, 1971

Roland W. Comstock, Director of Environmental Affairs at NSP, writes a nine page letter to Grant Merritt of MPCA. The letter reflects a closer working agreement between the two than had previously existed. "The maintenance work currently underway must continue. Waste water is continuing to be produced at the rate of approximately 2,000 gallons per working day. . . . To provide adequate "freeboard" (room for additional storage) in the plant, and to provide storage capacity for the continuing transfer of water through purification systems,

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it is necessary to release two batches totaling approximately 15,000 gallons at the present time. . . ." The letter points out, however, that samples of this proposed discharge have been in the hands of both the Health Department and the MPCA since December 14.

It appears that NSP is responding to Merritt's November 24 letter, However, Comstock is careful not to be misunderstood about the future:

> "However, all of these methods raise the more basic question of how such low level wastes should be handled in the future. It is important to understand that the plant was designed and licensed to dispose of high activity wastes by solidification and low activity wastes by dilution release under controlled and regulated specification. When the reclaimed volume of water exceeds the requirements for reuse, there is no means within the system to handle the water other than by release.
>
> The problem will be an ongoing one for the life of the plant. Clothing will continue to be washed, the laboratories will continue to make analyses, piped gland seal leakage from many pumps and joints will continue. While the plant is exceptionally tight in this respect, and all this water is carefully collected and treated in systems designed for this purpose, contamination from oils, grease, chemicals, etc. is inevitable. This *low* activity water (this must be emphasized) is extensively treated to reclaim as much as possible. However, not all this water can be reclaimed for reuse and the basic problem will continue. . . ."

In other words, the Monticello plant will continue to discharge into the Mississippi River limited amounts of low level radioactive materials. Those persons concerned about the effects of low level radiation find no comfort in Comstock's letter.

December 23, 1971

MECCA files a petition in Washington for a public hearing by the AEC on the question of the closing of the Monticello plant.

January 1, 1972

In homes and offices throughout this country the new 1972 General Electric calendar is tacked to the wall. The calendar features full color illustrations for each month. The illustrations are large, perhaps 11 x 14 inches, and the quality of reproduction is extraordinarily high. The photograph for July is a picture of the Monticello, Minnesota, plant taken from across the river. There are trees and a canoe is on the water. The caption for the photograph reads, "The harmonious balance between the environment and power generation is dramatized by a family canoeing on the Mississippi in Minnesota alongside Monticello nuclear power plant, built by General Electric."

January 6, 1972

Dr. Conrad Straub, professor of environmental health at the School of Public Health, University of Minnesota, tells a meeting of the Metropolitan Health Board, Metropolitan Council, Saint Paul, that the public was overly excited by

April 6
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Minnesota
Coon raipeds

Dear Mr. Industry

I know I am only one person out of a million. But I think you are wrong and I think you know it too. You kill all our animals and you kill the human race too. You may not know it but in another century you will kill your own great grand childeren and I dont think if you do then you can kill and not be punished. How would it be if you had to sit down at the table and eat a fish that was in oil slicked or poluted water. So you sit down right now and think about what your doing to the human race.

Sincerely

Mark Simmonds

P.S.
Please do something about the bad air to owr you wont be able to live in the year 2000A.D. If you want to reply the adress is on the top.

To the left of this letter, in brilliant white type against a flat black background, NSP comments,

This booklet is dedicated to the Mark Simmondses of all ages who have been misinformed on the subject of pollution, its causes, and what has and is being done to correct them.

The thoughts expressed in the letter on the opposite page did not spring full-blown from the mind of a twelve-year-old boy. The distortion of fact and emotional tone of Mark's letter have been learned from many sources: his parents, his teachers, his newspapers, his radio and television—they all have contributed in some measure to the indictment you have read.

Mark's letter is not unique. We receive similar letters almost daily from people all over the NSP service area who share, to a greater or lesser extent, Mark's concern....

The brochure concludes with a reproduction of a letter from Earl Ewald, Chairman of the Board, NSP, to Mark Simmonds. "I am determined to do all I can to shape a society that will provide you—and my grandchildren—with the benefits of a highly developed, healthy environment," he writes.

Books and pamphlets are argued and quoted. NSP's opponents cite Sheldon Novick's *The Careless Atom*, a book which carries in heavy type on its cover the following statements:

"In principle nuclear reactors are dangerous . . . In my mind, nuclear reactors do not belong on the surface of the earth"

Edward Teller

Up to now, nuclear accidents have been relatively minor. How long can we hope to avoid major disaster?

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The AEC publishes another in its series "Understanding the Atom," *Nuclear Power and the Environment.* This booklet concludes: "With its deep concern for both protection of the environment and meeting the Nation's massive energy needs, the Commission is convinced that nuclear power best meets these twin objectives."

Perhaps the Commission is convinced, but two of its scientists at its Lawrence Radiation Laboratory in Livermore, California, seem to think differently. John W. Gofman and Arthur R. Tamplin's book, *POISONED POWER–The Case Against Nuclear Power Plants,* becomes a heavy tool for NSP's opponents; already openly critical of the AEC's relatively lenient (in relation to MPCA standards) radioactive emission limits, they find Gofman and Tamplin strongly on their side:

> *About a year ago, we began to perceive the dimensions of the massive hoax being perpetrated upon the public. It was very difficult for us to believe that what we observed to be occurring could truly be real. Indeed, up to that time we, deeply immersed in atomic energy research, had been lulled into the belief that nuclear electricity was the one atomic energy program which posed very little threat to society. How wrong we were. There is a real potential disaster ahead, we now know. It is, we think, important that you share this knowledge with us.*
>
> . . . . .
>
> *(1) Radiation, to be expected from several atomic energy programs burgeoning rapidly, is a far, far more serious hazard to humans than any of the so-called "experts" had previously thought possible.*
>
> *(2) The hazard to this generation of humans from cancer and leukemia as a result of atomic radiation is TWENTY TIMES as great as had been thought previously. The hazard to all future generations in the form of genetic damage and deaths, had been* underestimated *even more seriously.*
>
> *In a rational society, where the health and welfare of citizens would be considered as paramount, such research findings would have been warnings welcomed. And we expected our findings would be welcomed. Instead we received a torrent of vitriol and personal condemnation from three major sources:*
>
> *The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission*
> *The Joint Committee on Atomic Energy*
> *The Electric Utility Industry*

NSP's opponents were quick to point out that Gofman and Tamplin could scarcely be two of the Mark Simmonds of this world.

COVERED BRIDGE

The Division of Technical Information of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission publishes a series of pamphlets (now numbering more than 50 titles) under the general title "Understanding the Atom".

certain environmental groups about the question of NSP dumping low level radioactive wastes into the Mississippi River.

Dr. Donald Barber, associate professor of environmental health at the university, presents before the board meeting what is in effect a short paper on low level radiation. Although the paper appears to support NSP and AEC's position on low level radiation, the conclusion of the paper is a bit confusing. "So radiation delivered in high doses over short periods of time is dangerous and must be managed carefully if we are to take advantage of the benefits it can provide. The situation is quite different for low doses of radiation delivered over long periods of time . . . . So is there an effect or is there not? The answer is we do not know! That answer is not very satisfying and yet we live with it regularly. It is the only truthful answer to many problems thrust upon us every day of our lives. . . ."

January 10, 1972

The Executive Board of MPCA at its regular monthly meeting authorizes its director, Grant Merritt, to request that the AEC hold a hearing on the shutting down of the Monticello plant. In effect, the authorization places MPCA squarely behind MECCA, which has already made such a request to the AEC. (The AEC is, at present, reviewing effects of nuclear plants on the environment; the report of the Monticello review will be available in early spring. Both MECCA and MPCA want Monticello closed at least until the report is made public.)

January 19, 1972

Robert Wissink, chairman of the Advisory Committee for Radioactive Safety of the Minnesota Health Department and senior health physicist, tells a Rochester, Minnesota, meeting of science teachers that the controversy over radioactive discharges from Monticello is an emotional and political one and not based on scientific findings. He tells the audience that he has calculated that a person would have to drink 3.2 million glasses of Mississippi River water to equal the radioactive exposure of one chest X-ray.

[Note: The above chronology is not intended to be all-inclusive. A complete record of the Monticello dispute would fill several volumes. However, the account above does include sufficient data to point up the main directions of the dispute and the nature of the questions raised by the building and operation of the Monticello plant.]

Part Two

In my motel room in down-town Minneapolis I was lying on the bed reading some of the fifteen or twenty pounds of documents I had collected dealing with the Monticello power plant controversy. I had come to Minneapolis a week earlier, checked into the motel—an eighth floor room

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—and set about collecting information. I was reading a statement attributed to Dr. John Gofman of the AEC staff and author of the book everybody in Minneapolis was talking about, *Poisoned Power*.

> The AIF (Atomic Industrial Forum), the AEC and Dr. Bond all seem to believe that a stupid set of lies entitle them to ram ill-considered atomic programs down the throats of the American public.
>
> It is becoming so obvious to citizens and the Congress that all of you represent a despicable fraud. The more you all lie, hide the facts, and deliberately and unashamedly distort every responsible criticism, the earlier will be the celebrated demise of your outrageous activities.

Dr. Gofman has a reputation for strong words, I thought. And then I smelled smoke in my room, not much smoke, just a hint of an acrid smell. I got up and looked in the bathroom and there coming from the ceiling vent was a thin brown breeze of smoke. It was beginning to smudge the mirror.

I phoned the desk and said, "There's smoke coming out of the ventilator in my bathroom. I'm on the eighth floor. Do you think I should get out of this room?"

The desk clerk was softly reassuring. "There is absolutely no danger, sir," he said. "Just stay where you are; everything is under control."

I went back to the bed and began reading a document written by Dr. Bond titled "Radiation Standards, Particularly as Related to Nuclear Power Plants" which I had got from the AEC public information office in Washington. Dr. Bond's article was most critical of Dr. Gofman's thinking and early in Bond's paper he asserted that Dr. Gofman's conclusions ". . . represent mainly a fallacious academic exercise in the context of nuclear power plant reactors, with no relationship to reality." Dr. Bond isn't too gentle either, I thought.

I didn't get very far into Dr. Bond's paper, though, because my motel room was filling up with smoke at an alarming rate, and I could hear firetrucks arriving outside the building and people yelling and suddenly the heaviness of smoke started stinging my lungs and I thought I'd better get the hell out of here. I went out into the hall and smoke was swirling everywhere, the lights were dimmed and more and more smoke seemed to be coming out of the walls and light fixtures and things were getting worse.

A fireman came, carrying a huge flashlight and wearing a mask, with an oxygen tank strapped on his back. He led me down to the lobby where people were milling around and women crying and someone was giving people oxygen and a woman with a bleeding hand was being led somewhere and water was coming down from the ceiling and in some places it ran over spotlights recessed into the ceiling and some of the lights exploded and scattered glass all over the lobby and the people too. I looked over at the desk and there was the clerk looking calm and more or less disinterested while firemen were coming and rushing upstairs with hatchets and policemen were pushing people here and there.

I couldn't help but think that this calm clerk behind the

One title in the series is Nuclear Power and the Environment. *The cover of this pamphlet is a full color photograph of the Yankee Nuclear Power Station in Rowe, Massachusetts. In warm pastel colors the power plant rests in the middle of the photograph with the plant's mirror image reflected in smooth water in front and with a dense growth of trees rising behind to a clear sky. One almost feels that the power plant really belongs there. It certainly does not seem to be disturbing anything.*

Opposite page one of the pamphlet is a full color photograph captioned "Covered Bridge in Montgomery, Vermont". This photograph shows a country road in the foreground, a covered bridge in the center, and hills with a dense growth of trees in the background. The trees are the same warm red as the trees in the cover power plant photograph; apparently both photographs were taken in the early fall. Curiously, no mention of Montgomery, Vermont, or of covered bridges occurs in the text of the pamphlet.

One cannot help but wonder what this covered bridge photograph is doing in a technical pamphlet. Is it possible that the covered bridge picture and the nuclear power plant picture, so similar in composition, have been deliberately placed close together so that a casual reader will identify them with each other? Is the AEC subtly suggesting that the Yankee Power Station in Rowe, Massachusetts, is as folksy and as innocent—and maybe even as quaint—as the Covered Bridge in Montgomery, Vermont?

The pamphlet concludes, "The challenge facing us is to minimize the effects [of power plants on the environment] and to achieve—within prevailing economic and technological limitations—our twin goals of low cost, reliable power and preservation of the quality of our environment. With its deep concern for both protection of the environment and meeting the Nation's massive energy needs, the Commission is convinced that nuclear power best meets these twin objectives."

Critics of the Atomic Energy Commission point out that it is charged with a dual mission: the promotion of nuclear power and, simultaneously, the control of nuclear power. Some critics feel that the AEC has pressed its campaign to sell the public on the safety and the "cleanliness" of nuclear power too fast and too far.

"The Atomic Energy Commission has operated for so many years under a system designed to withhold more information than it releases that, although it will not tell a lie, neither can it tell the truth."

—*"Atomic Doubletalk"*, Gene Schrader; The Center Magazine, *A Publication of the Center for the study of Democratic Institutions, Jan-Feb 1971, p. 29.*

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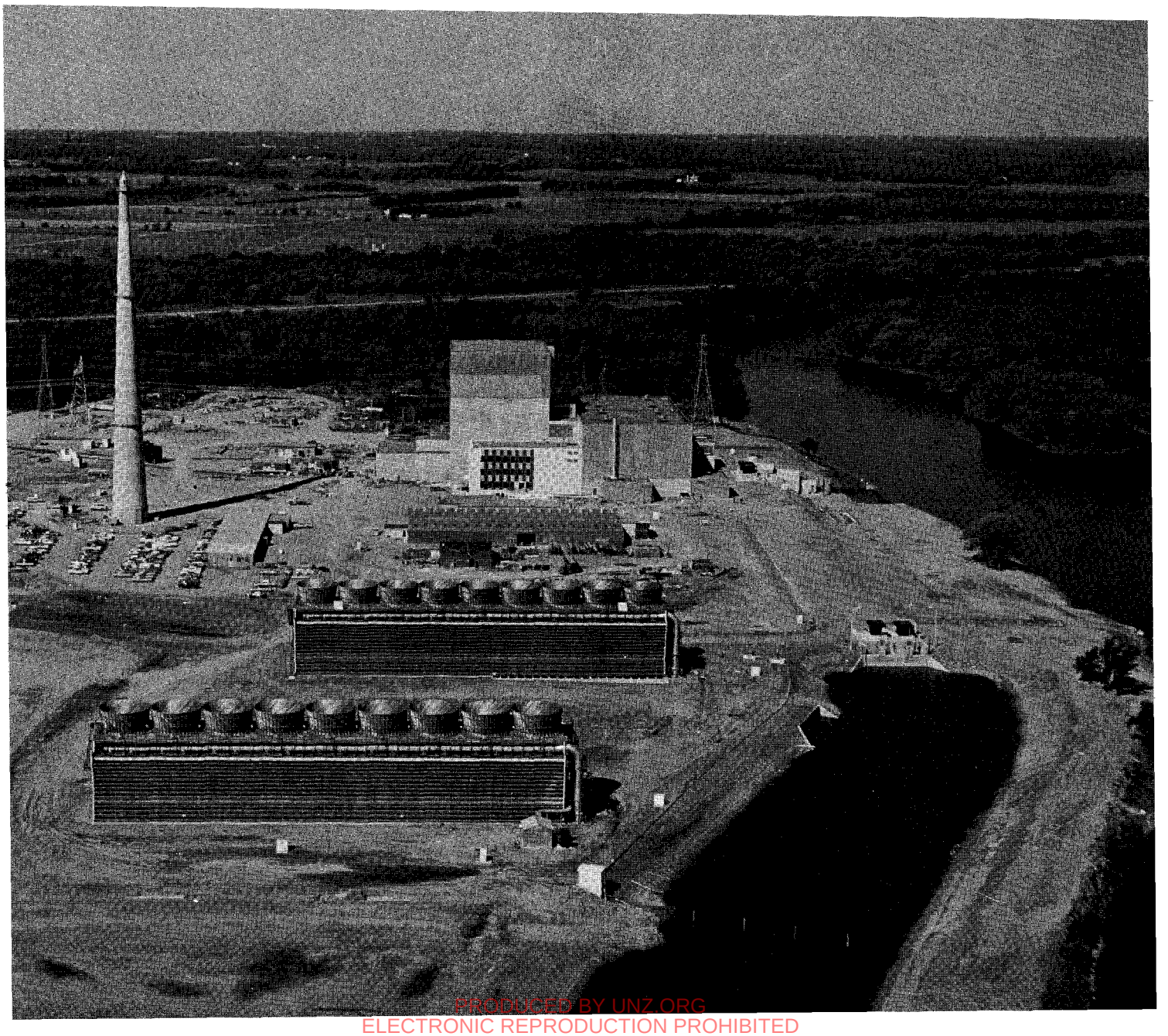
desk was the same clerk who calmly informed me half an hour before that there wasn't any danger, "Just stay where you are. . . ." I had trusted him because he ought to know his motel better than I did; the motel was, in a way, his "field." Yet he had been absolutely wrong and if I had stayed up on the eighth floor much longer I probably wouldn't ever have been able to finish reading Dr. Bond's paper.

And standing there amid all that water and confusion, I wondered if the fire was a kind of little three-dimensional allegory. There was a little smoke coming out of the vent in the bathroom just like there was a little radioactive breeze coming out of the stack at Monticello. I called the "expert," the desk clerk, and he reassured me that there was absolutely no danger. The experts like Dr. Bond and the AEC are used to reassure the people in Minneapolis and Saint Paul that there is no danger, everything is under control out at Monticello. But in my case, the "expert" had been wrong, and all hell had broken loose up there on the eighth floor. Could the same thing happen in Monticello? Of course I know that scientific specialists can scarcely be compared to room clerks, but the allegory is interesting nevertheless, except that for it to be absolutely right there should have been two room clerks on the phone—one (like Dr. Bond) telling me things were perfectly all right up there on the eighth floor and another, maybe on an extension phone. yelling at me (like Dr. Gofman) to get the hell out of that room because it wasn't safe. Then I would have had a

A view, looking west, of the Northern States Power Company's 545-megawatt (mw) nuclear plant at Monticello, Minnesota. The plant was phased into the NSP system for the first time on March 5, 1971; it is located on the Mississippi River, 40 miles northwest of Minneapolis-St. Paul and three miles northwest of Monticello. The intake building is on the river, at right center; the windowless complex in the upper center of the photograph includes the condenser, the reactor (in the taller of the buildings), the turbine-generator, and (in the low wing at left) the radioactive waste building. The plant's transformer is hidden, in this view, behind the condenser. The long structures in the foreground are cooling towers; the stack at left is for the release of gaseous wastes. In the right foreground is the discharge canal. (Compare this photograph with the schematic diagram on the opposite page.)



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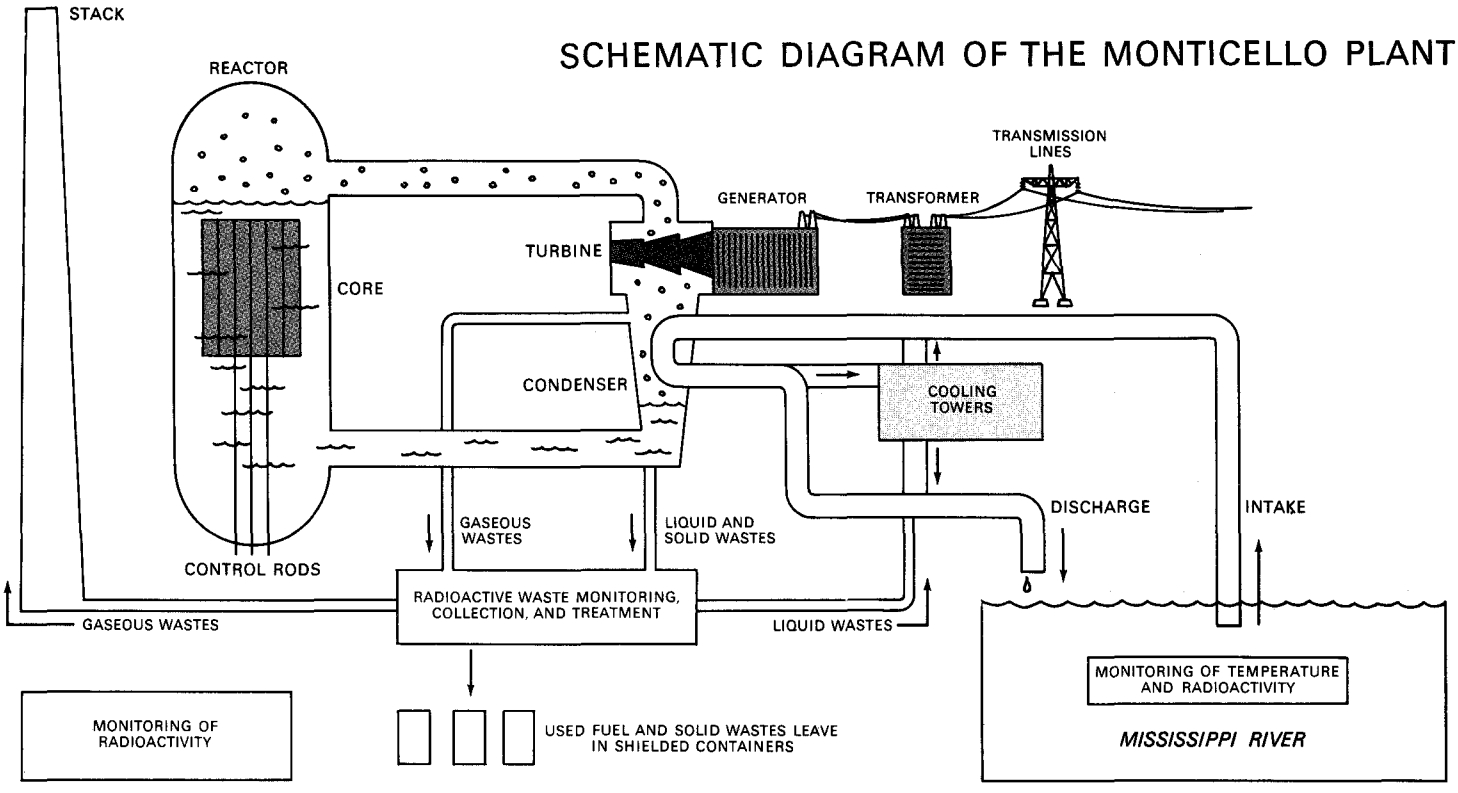

In a boiling water nuclear reactor power plant, nuclear fuel is the source of heat. The heat in the nuclear reactor boils water and the steam from this process drives a conventional turbo-generator.

The heat in the reactor is produced by fission, or the splitting of atoms. In this process, a large number of radioactive materials are created. While most of these are controlled and contained in the system (under normal operating conditions) some radioactive material is constantly being released into the air from the stack, and some radioactive material is regularly released in water returned to the river. While this release is generally referred to as "low level," there is considerable disagreement among scientists, utility spokesmen, and the Atomic Energy Commission on the dangers involved in the prolonged emission of "low level" radioactive materials.

Some idea of the magnitude of the Monticello operation can be gained from the Northern States Power Company description of the plant's nuclear core: "The Monticello plant nuclear fuel loading will consist of 484 fuel assemblies, each containing 49 fuel tubes. These fuel tubes will contain uranium dioxide pellets slightly enriched with a uranium isotope. The fuel tubes, about half an inch in diameter, will be made of zirconium alloy. Interspersed among the fuel assemblies will be 121 control rods. . . .A full nuclear fuel loading at the Monticello plant will require about 200,000 pounds of uranium. This amount of uranium in a reactor can provide the energy output equivalent to burning seven million tons of coal."

Conservationists and other interested citizens are concerned not only about emission of low level radioactive materials by this and similar plants, but about thermal effects on the environment (particularly the river). There is also the awesome (if remote) possibility of tremendous destruction if the plant were to malfunction and emergency measures failed to halt a spiraling rate of nuclear fission. The results in such a situation are difficult to predict; most authorities agree that the possibilities for such an explosion are very small (at least a million-to-one, according to the AEC), but that they do exist.

chance to choose which specialist I wanted to believe.

That had been the way it was all the preceding week as I went from specialist to specialist in Minneapolis, reading document after document, asking questions about Monticello. First I talked with Dr. Karim Ahmed, a bio-chemist and research director for Minnesota Public Interest Research Group, a private research group that receives its funds from student fees at eighteen Minnesota colleges and universities. Though MPIRG has concerned itself with a number of public issues—from a study of the Hennepin County jail to snowmobiles—it had not yet entered the Monticello fray. Therefore, I thought, Dr. Ahmed would be a good, objective starting place, a highly respected local scientist working for an independent organization.

Ahmed, an extraordinarily handsome man perhaps in his early thirties with soft oriental features and a Prince Valiant haircut, met me in his cluttered office in a converted flower shop not far from the university campus. Though there was a great deal of confusion in the office as people mostly young—jeans, jerseys, beards—continued to hurry in and out and around—everything seemed to be urgent to them—Ahmed quietly and patiently outlined some of the things he thought I should understand about the affair.

"Probably the first thing you should understand," he said, "is that there is widespread mistrust of the Atomic Energy Commission." The AEC has been given what is essentially an impossible "mission". It is, on the one hand, charged with the responsibility of promoting the peaceful use of nuclear power. On the other hand, it is also charged with the responsibility of policing the use of that power. The result is that the AEC is a kind of schizophrenic organization; it is its own judge, and it appears that it cannot always act responsibly in its policing powers because its promotion function gets in the way. Therefore, Ahmed

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The table of comparison at right, distributed by Northern States Power, dramatizes the differences between tolerable levels of radioactive discharge limits set by the AEC and those set by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

The first column is a list of various radioactive isotopes produced by nuclear fission. The second column gives the MPCA safety limits for the Monticello, Minnesota, nuclear plant discharges into the Mississippi river at normal river flow. (uc/ml is the abbreviation for micro-curies per one one-thousandth of a liter of water, a tiny quantity of water not much greater than several drops. A curie is a measure of radioactive emission equal to 37,000,000,000 particles per second; a micro-curie is one-millionth of a curie.)

The third column gives the AEC safety limits. (10CFR20 is the code for the AEC regulation, CFR being the abbreviation for Code of Federal Regulations and 10/20 the numbers of the specific regulations.)

The far right column compares the two limits.

The figures in both the AEC and MPCA columns are inconceivably small, at least for the ordinary layman's mind to consider, but it is clear that the MPCA toleration levels are much smaller than those of the AEC. Thus, for example, Cs^{137} (cesium-137) limits according to MPCA standards are $2x10^{-13}$ or .0000000000002 micro-curies, while the AEC toleration level of $2x10^{-5}$ is .00002 micro-curies. Thus, the MPCA is 100 million times more restrictive in this case than the AEC. The half-life of radioactvie cesium (Cs^{137}) is thirty-three years, making it a relatively long-lived radioactive element; in thirty-three years its radioactivity will have decreased by one-half; in thirty-three years more than half will have decreased by one half, and so on. Half-lives of radioactive isotopes produced in a nuclear power plant range from a few seconds to seventeen million years.

The Northern States Power plant has informed MPCA that the Monticello plant cannot always meet the Cs^{137} limits set by the MPCA. Federal courts have so far ruled that the AEC standards are the only ones binding on Northern States Power and that the MPCA—which, in effect, means the state of Minnesota—has no authority to regulate radioactive discharges from plants operating in the state. The decision has been appealed to the Supreme Court.

Comparison of MPCA Radioactive Discharge Limits with 10CFR20 Radioactive Discharge Limits in Water

Isotope	MPCA Limit (For Normal River Flow) uc/ml	10CFR20 Limit uc/ml	Comparison (10CFR20/MPCA)
H^3	$2x10^{-8}$	$3x10^{-3}$	150,000
F^{18}	$8x10^{-13}$	$8x10^{-4}$	1,000,000,000
Na^{24}	$2x10^{-12}$	$2x10^{-4}$	100,000,000
Cr^{51}	$9x10^{-13}$	$2x10^{-3}$	2,200,000,000
Mn^{56}	$5x10^{-12}$	$1x10^{-4}$	20,000,000
Co^{58}	$9x10^{-12}$	$1x10^{-4}$	11,000,000
Co^{60}	$9x10^{-13}$	$5x10^{-5}$	56,000,000
Sr^{90}	$4x10^{-13}$	$3x10^{-7}$	750,000
Sr^{91}	$2x10^{-11}$	$7x10^{-5}$	3,500,000
Sr^{92}	$4x10^{-12}$	$7x10^{-5}$	18,000,000
Tc^{99}	$1x10^{-10}$	$3x10^{-4}$	3,000,000
Mo^{99}	$1x10^{-10}$	$2x10^{-4}$	2,000,000
I^{131}	$4x10^{-11}$	$3x10^{-7}$	7,500
I^{133}	$2x10^{-10}$	$1x10^{-6}$	5,000
I^{135}	$6x10^{-11}$	$4x10^{-6}$	67,000
Te^{132}	$6x10^{-13}$	$3x10^{-5}$	50,000,000
Cs^{136}	$6x10^{-14}$	$9x10^{-5}$	1,500,000,000
Cs^{137}	$2x10^{-13}$	$2x10^{-5}$	100,000,000
Ba^{139}	$4x10^{-13}$	$3x10^{-6}$	7,500,000
Ba^{140}	$4x10^{-12}$	$3x10^{-5}$	7,500,000

H=hydrogen F=fluorine Na=sodium Cr=chromium Mn=manganese Co=cobalt Sr=strontium Tc=technetium Mo=molybdenum I=iodine Te=tellurium Cs=cesium Ba=barium

explained, many scientists were very suspicious of the AEC's judgments. And, of course, the Monticello plant was built with AEC safety levels as norms.*

Ahmed recommended that I read Gofman and Tamplin's *Poisoned Power.* He was particularly enthusiastic about John Gofman, saying that Gofman has been going around giving speeches and writing articles, trying to alert people to the dangers in low level radiation, but the AEC was apparently trying to discredit him. "Some people accuse him of being 'unprofessional'," Ahmed said, "because he discloses information that is disturbing, but I think he is doing a great service by his activities."

I asked Ahmed if he were worried about Monticello and the problem of low level radiation,

"I'm extremely worried," he said. "We all are. There just isn't enough known about these hazards for us to take chances."

**Technically the AEC does not exactly "set" radiation exposure levels. These levels are established by a complex group of federal and private scientific groups including the Federal Radiation Council, the National Academy of Science, the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements and other organizations. However, the AEC has been charged with the responsibility of enforcing the standards and for purposes of simplicity these standards will be termed AEC standards in this report.*

The things Ahmed said that morning were things I heard again and again as I talked to scientists and environmentalists:

1. The double function of the AEC renders its judgments and standards questionable;

2. Northern States Power was not a cold and unscrupulous corporation, indifferent to human values and environmental problems; NSP had, as one scientist would say later, "been sold a bill of goods by the AEC."

3. The dangers worrying Ahmed and others are of two kinds, both difficult to simplify:

a) When in operation, the Monticello plant emits minute quantities of radioactive materials into the river and into the air. These materials are of such low levels of radioactivity that they are, say, over a week or maybe a year, probably harmless. But no one knows their effects over a long period of time. Although the AEC speaks of the dissipation of these materials through "dilution"–that is, dumping minute quantities into a large river like the Mississippi, or releasing them through high stacks to be blown "away" by the wind (see Radioactive Wastes, *AEC's "Understanding the Atom" series, p. 11)–the concerned scientists point out that the extremely long life of some of these wastes allows*

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them to build up in the land and the life, concentrate, until their quantity becomes dangerous. The critics are fond of quoting Gene Bryerton who, in 1969, published* Nuclear Dilemma, *an in-depth study of nuclear power done for the Eugene, Oregon newspaper,* Eugene Register Guard. *Bryerton quotes a number of studies of this concentration of radioactive materials and the manner in which this concentration gets into the food chain. Bryerton cites a study of the Columbia River "in which it was found that although radioactivity of the water was slight, the radioactivity of river plankton was 2,000 times greater; of fish feeding on the plankton, 15,000 times greater; of young swallows fed on the insects from the river, 500,000 times greater, and of water fowl egg yolks from birds that lived on the river, one-million times greater." A similar process occurs when radioactive material is released from the stacks to blow "away". It really cannot go "away" but may settle to the ground, to be assimilated by plant life in concentrated forms which are then further concentrated when eaten by animals or humans.*

Sheldon Novick has written of this problem: "Every time radioactive waste is dumped into a stream, buried, dropped into the ocean, discharged from the air or otherwise released from human control, it passes into the complex world of living things. It will pass from living thing to living thing, sometimes being concentrated, at other times being dispersed, with an efficiency and ingenuity which man has not yet come to understand. At unpredictable times and places, this radioactive waste will reappear in man's food, air or water. It will not go away, for decades or centuries or even millennia."

The effects of this kind of concentration over long periods of time simply are not understood. Thus the concerned scientists worry not only about the present generation, but also the effects on generations to come.

b) There is a remote possibility that an accident at Monticello together with a failure of safety devices could release large amounts of highly radioactive materials. Such an accident is extremely unlikely. No one seriously disputes the AEC's claim that, "No other comparable field of endeavor has ever in the history of the human race achieved such a record of safety [as the nuclear reactor program]."

Yet there have been some near-miss accidents at nuclear power plants, the most famous of which is probably the one that occurred at the Enrico Fermi reactor located about thirty miles from Detroit. On October 5, 1966, the plant was suddenly shut down because radiation alarm systems alerted technicians to a sudden unexpected rise in radioactivity in the core of the reactor. For a time some observers feared it would be necessary to evacuate the whole city. It took months for technicians to analyze the accident, which was caused when the cooling system in the core failed to operate properly, resulting in a partial "meltdown" of the core.

"A core meltdown is perhaps the most-discussed and most-feared phenomenon of all potentialities insofar as the AEC and power companies are concerned," writes Gene Bryerton. "The fantastic heat generated by a molten core, estimated at about 6,000 degrees Fahrenheit, is sufficient to melt through virtually any material that might be placed in its path as it bores downward through the reactor vessel and all containments, eventually releasing at least a portion of its radioactivity fission product inventory through the earth or possibly through breaks in the containment sphere. Hence the appellation 'China syndrome' to the phenomenon, as some only half-jokingly assert it will melt through to China."

Of course there are emergency measures to stop such an occurrence, but they have never been tested under actual operating conditions. No one really knows exactly what would happen were such a complete breakdown of control to occur—a meltdown occurs when the level of atomic reaction goes out of control and the ensuing heat rise melts the sheaths of the fissionable materials—thus, in effect, rendering inoperative the normal controls of the rate of fission.

Of course, Ahmed did not say all of these things that morning in his office. But he did indicate concern over these two possible hazards from the Monticello plant.

I asked him about MECCA. "What do you think of them and their efforts to shut down Monticello permently?"

"I think MECCA is doing a great job in alerting the public to the Monticello problem," he said. "And I think you should talk to Dean Abrahamson out at the university."

So I called the university and made an appointment to talk with Professor Abrahamson, the man who originally asked the questions that seem to have started off the whole Monticello controversy.

But first I thought it would be interesting to talk to some NSP people. NSP headquarters is a huge modern office building on the mall in downtown Minneapolis, all glass and shiny metal. Visitors are not allowed above the first floor lobby unless they sign their names in a book, put down the time of arrival, indicate the person whom they wish to visit, and receive and wear a plastic visitor identification label. I wrote *Leo J. Hertzel—2:20 PM—Michael J. Murphy, Information Representative,* and then I received my visitor badge; I was number G 67. "You must wear the badge at all times when you are in the building," the lady behind the book said. "Otherwise you will be stopped and questioned." Then the guard allowed me to come behind a kind of rope railing and get to the elevator where I pushed the 5 button. It was very much unlike MPIRG headquarters.

Michael Murphy is a young, intense public relations man who has a degree in psychology and once took a course from John Berryman. ("On some days Berryman was very good," he said as I took off my coat.)

* *The likely definition of "minute" seems worth speculating about. By 1982, for example, the lower Mississippi River will be diluting the low level radioactive discharges from some 28 nuclear reactors located on its own banks and the banks of various tributaries: seven on the Mississippi itself, seven on the Tennessee, five on the Illinois, four on the Ohio, two each on the Missouri and the Arkansas, and one on the Cedar—representing altogether an operating capacity of more than 21-million kilowatts.*

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I told him I was interested in the Monticello war.

Murphy knew a great deal about the war: facts, figures, dates, names. "The trouble with all this controversy," he said, "is that it has been presented to the public in the wrong way. The real problem is not pollution; the real problem is our need for power." He pointed out that the nation's need for power is growing rapidly—that even if the public was persuaded to cut down on its power usage, maybe eliminate all electric toothbrushes and electric can openers and maybe even air conditioners and turn out every light in the country when it was not absolutely needed, the nation's need would continue to grow because of growing commercial-industrial demands for power. Further, larger and larger amounts of power are being used to help control pollution—power used in the process of cleaning sewage, for example. "We have to get the power from somewhere," he said. "Fossil fuel supplies like gas are limited." We have to decide whether to burn huge quantities of coal—which means ravaging the hills in the coal fields—in a fossil fuel plant which will emit pollutants in the smoke from the stack, or turn to something cleaner and cheaper like nuclear power.

I asked him if a fossil fuel plant could be made absolutely clean, so that it gave off no polluting substances. "No, it can't be made absolutely clean from adverse environmental impact."

I asked him about charges that the AEC was untrustworthy, that NSP had been sold a bill of goods by that agency.

"I have faith in the Atomic Energy Commission and the utility corporations and the atomic scientific community. They know what they are talking about."

"What about charges that Monticello is unsafe because it's been closed down so much the last year, like it's closed now because of those baffles in the torus?"

"I've never seen so many do-gooders in my life as I've seen here in Minneapolis the past couple of years," he answered. "The trouble is that too many well-intentioned people have been making statements about things they don't really understand. As far as the plant being closed, no plant, fossil or nuclear, is considered fully shaken down until two full years of operation. There is nothing unusual about Monticello's record."

He loaded me down with documents, diagrams, mimeographed releases, pamphlets, photographs, and a list of scientists who approved of nuclear power plants.

I asked him if I could go out to Monticello and tour the plant.

"I'm afraid that would be impossible," he said. "Regulations are too strict to allow visitors."

I told him maybe I'd come back after I'd talked to some other people.

"Fine. Just remember, we have faith in the Atomic Energy Commission and the atomic scientific community."

I wondered just which scientific community he had faith in; Gofman and Tamplin and Ahmed and presumably Abrahamson were surely members of the scientific community. But I decided to ask that question later.

I took the elevator to the first floor, signed out, turned in my badge and, carrying all the documents I'd got from Murphy, walked along the mall to my motel. It was getting dark and the trees on the mall were all lit with tiny electric lights. The lights were very pretty and I was glad they were there and I got to thinking about Murphy's statement that the power has to come from somewhere. I guess I'd never really thought of the problem in that way before; one way or another somebody has to get that power to light the trees and the phone booths and the stop lights and the street lights and the store windows along this mall and everywhere else in the country; we'll have to pay some way for all of these pleasant things.

I went up to the eighth floor of the motel and into my room and turned on the lights (still aware that all of these years I've pretty much taken lights and electricity for granted; I just plugged things into sockets and they ran or lit up or got hot; I had never really thought much before about where that power came from or that its production might be the cause of problems and difficult decisions for someone.) I spread the papers Murphy had given me out on the bed and began to read them.

Some, like "HOW WE FAILED TO WIPE EVERYONE OUT BY 1971 (and other information)," were simply clever, expensive, superficial public relations gimmicks—lots of colored illustrations and mod typography with a fold out and clever sketches. It was difficult for me to imagine any serious person being influenced by this kind of thing.

But most of the documents were factual and impressive, things like "What We *Do* Know About Low-Level Radiation," by the President of the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements, an independent scientific body that has helped the AEC establish radiation standards. ". . . Ionizing radiation, and its effects on man and the environment, whether regarded as a biological insult to the individual or as a general environmental pollutant, is probably the most studied, best understood, most wisely used agent, found essential to our health and well being . . . ." concluded the 29 page essay.

One NSP handout in particular seemed to make a strong point in the company's favor. Called "Summary and Chronological Events Concerning the Monticello Nuclear Plant," by NSP Vice-President R. D. Furber, the paper points out: "It was almost two years after construction of the Monticello plant began that the MPCA issued the discharge permit for the plant. The plant had been designed and constructed according to AEC specifications which the

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Environmentalists and utility spokesmen alike agree that there will be a sharp increase in our need for power of all types during the next thirty years. Northern States Power of Minneapolis has embarked on a cautious campaign to educate the public to conserve power. Yet NSP spokesmen stress that even if the public eliminated all power consuming gimmicks—from electric can openers to electric tooth brushes—and everyone in the United States turned out lights when they were not absolutely necessary, the net effect on the rising need for power would be small because most power is used for industrial purposes. The two advertisements following (run during 1971 in Saint Paul and Minneapolis newspapers) relate directly or indirectly to the cautious campaign to conserve the use of electric power. (The "junkers into steel" ad [page 51] is particularly relevant because it is estimated that to reclaim steel from junk takes one quarter of the energy required to produce it from ore.)

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Roy, why doesn't NSP find ways to conserve power instead of promoting its use?

That's a fair question, Homer. They plan to. Here's how.

NSP is going to embark on a program to help people use electricity in a wiser and more prudent way. And we've been asked once again to tell all our friends the story.

NSP hopes to be able to suggest many ways to conserve electricity by not promoting some types of appliances and by urging consumers to guard against wasteful and frivolous kinds of use.

Because our population is growing all the time, the need for electricity is growing all the time too.

But the need for power grows even faster than the population because almost everything that makes life easier uses electricity.

Hence, the need for new generating plants.

Now some people may ask, "Why doesn't NSP eliminate advertising?"

Well, Homer, all uses of electricity don't add to peak loads that result in the need for building new power plants.

Instead, many uses provide opportunities to better balance the high and low points of demand, and therefore allow NSP to operate its plants more efficiently.

Efficient operation results in economies of cost and conservation of fuel.

And conservation of natural resources is very important.

So you see Homer, when NSP says it intends to promote both the use of electricity and the conservation of energy, it's not as paradoxical as it appears.

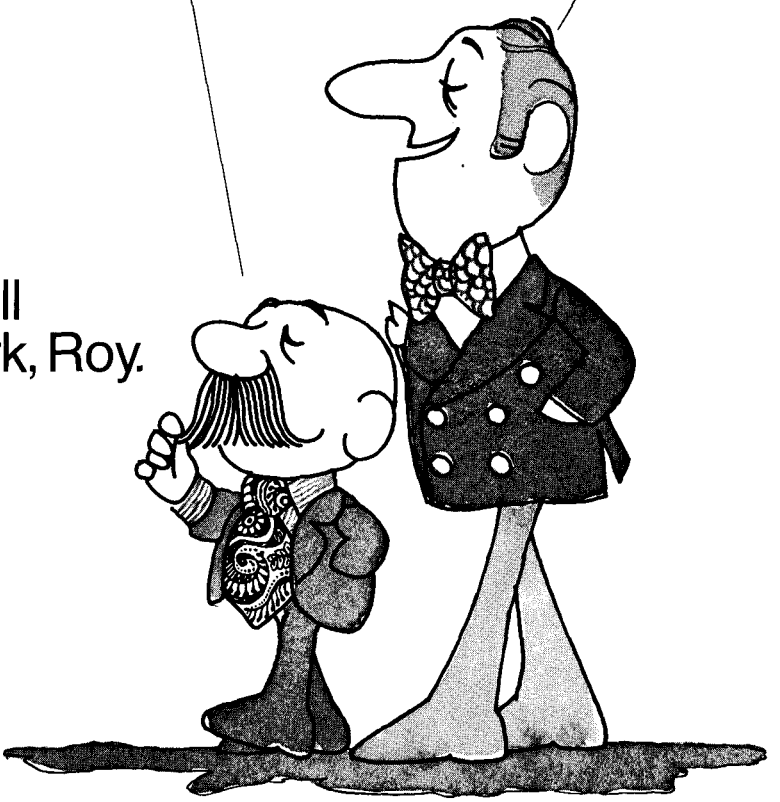
They will promote usage where it is deemed beneficial to improve the environment.

But they will also suggest ways that we can conserve power where it is important to do so – during periods when demand already taxes equipment.

We can all do our part by spacing out electrical use and avoiding the peak periods during the day.

What do you think, Homer?

You still do nice work, Roy.



At NSP providing electricity is our responsibility... using it wisely is everybody's responsibility.

NSP
a brighter life for you

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company was legally obligated to follow." There's no getting around the fact that MPCA tried to change the rules of the game right in the middle of the game. And it was an expensive game NSP was playing; the design and construction of a nuclear power plant is not a cheap affair. This Monticello one was designed to meet AEC standards; almost two years later MPCA wants to change the whole structure of things. You can't really blame a corporation for being disturbed by something like that. I remembered Murphy saying that no one at NSP anticipated anything like this public outcry and state interference when the plant was first begun.

I turned out the light. I went to sleep thinking that the people I saw on the fifth floor of NSP, Murphy and his associates, all seemed to me very "straight"—ties and suits and jackets and neatly polished shoes. The people out at Ahmed's place mostly looked disheveled—jeans, jerseys, army jackets, or, like Ahmed, sweaters and slacks. I am usually not much impressed by "straight" people, but in this case it seemed to me that the company men had some points in their favor. Which side am I supposed to be on, I wondered?

"If you want my frank opinion," said one health official, "this whole conflict is just political. MECCA people have used the issue to get ahead in politics. And those other groups don't really know what's going on; just a bunch of housewives getting excited about things they don't understand."

"I don't have much time to talk," said Ken Dzugan, Research Scientist for MPCA, "but I can say that we are all very much concerned about the effects of low level radiation over a long period of time. We don't know enough about the effects of these things to make intelligent judgments on the matters. The AEC is going to hold hearings on this subject in Washington pretty soon and I'm extremely busy getting ready for them. But to answer your other question quickly, I think MECCA is doing a fine job keeping the public aware of what is going on."

"As far as the Monticello plant is concerned we have two demands. First, they must make the plant absolutely clean, zero emission of radioactive materials. Second, the AEC must conduct a full scale test of emergency safety factors under real operating conditions—build a little plant somewhere and find out what really happens if you get a meltdown, see if there are emergency cooling procedures that will actually work*; and until that's done, the Monticello plant and every other nuclear plant in the world should be shut down. These things are too dangerous to fool around with." I was talking with Howard Vogel, chairman of MECCA's legal committee. Wearing a purple shirt and a purple striped tie and a striped suit, Vogel sat in his office talking excitedly. It was obvious that he liked to talk and that MECCA and Monticello were among his favorite subjects.

"Our only alternative to these demands would be for NSP to shut down the nuclear plant entirely and build a fossil fuel plant out there; they can make fossil fuel plants amost completely clean," he said.

"That would cost a lot of money," I said.

"Hell, let them worry about that. Human lives are more important than money."

I asked Vogel about charges that MECCA was really a political organization, just raising questions to get some kind of political leverage.

"I won't deny that some MECCA people have in the past gone into politics, but as soon as they have, they've stopped speaking for the organization. Let me tell you about MECCA; it's what I call an 'environmental lobby.' It's about four years old and we've got about 2000 members and four chapters. We're not just interested in Monticello, we're interested in all kinds of environmental problems. We've even got a chapter inside the penitentiary bars at Stillwater—CAGE, it's called, Convicts' Association for Good Environment."

Vogel gave me a pile of documents which I put on top of another pile of documents I had collected at the MPCA offices earlier that day. The pure volume of paper I was collecting was simply astonishing. As I put on my coat to leave, Vogel asked me what I thought of the Monticello problem. This was the first time anyone had asked me anything, and I had to think for a while. Finally I told him that the people over at NSP seemed honest and sincere, Ahmed was a great guy, the MPCA people were busy and dedicated, and the whole thing was a puzzle. Sure, he said, those guys over at NSP are people just like you and me. They're not out to hurt anybody deliberately. They've just been given bad information by the AEC and now they have to try and live with it. It must not be easy for them, he said, I wouldn't want to be in their shoes. "By the way," he said, "have you read *Poisoned Power* by Gofman and Tamplin?"

Later that night I began reading Vogel's documents. First was a copy of MECCA's December 9 appeal to Governor Anderson, "Conviction that the Monticello nuclear plant threatens the safety and health of Minnesotans as long as it operates necessitates this request that the plant be closed down immediately. . ." Then a twenty-nine page petition to the AEC to suspend operations of the Monticello plant. Then a copy of an article by Ernest J. Sternglass of the University of Pittsburgh titled "Environmental Radiation and Human Health" that began, "The present paper will address itself to the evidence that low-level radiation from nuclear fission products in the environment such as are released by nuclear explosions and power reactors may already have produced serious effects on the health of the world's population. . . ." The paper deals primarily with effects of radiation on fetal and infant mortality and birth defects and is a spooky document containing such sentences as, "These correlations suggest that as many as 400,000 infants 0-1 year old in the U. S. alone may have died as the result of nuclear testing by 1965."

I turned out the light.

** Tests similar to this—called the "Loft tests"—are to be carried out in 1974, using a nuclear reactor whose size and capacity is about one-eighth that of "very large" (upwards of 600 megawatts) reactors. Explaining why such tests were not conducted prior to the actual operation of nuclear power plants, an AEC spokesman has said, "We didn't know enough."*

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North Star Steel turns junkers into steel.

More power to them.

If recycling is the key to ecology, electricity is the muscle.

7.1 million cars are junked each year in the U.S.A.—208,000 right here in Minnesota.

The two-car family may be here, but the cold, hard facts are that our rising standard of living is creating a fantastic junk pile across the country.

The people are rightly concerned. But what to do? One answer is to bury the junkers. But this wastes two of our most valuable resources—land and metals.

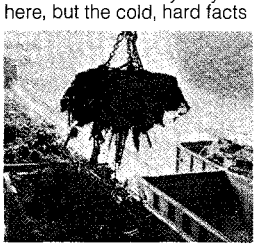
The true, ecological answer lies in recycling—using the junk metal to make new products that will once again be of value to man.

North Star Steel Company in St. Paul is an excellent example.

This mini-mill can melt over 300,000 tons of scrap annually, properly alloyed, in its 15,000 KVA and 30,000 KVA electric furnaces. Automotive scrap is supplied in the form of fist-sized chunks produced from giant shredding machines. Billets are reheated and rolled into finished bars of various shapes to build roads, bridges, buildings and machinery.

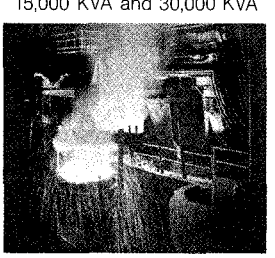
Recycling is the right idea. And North Star Steel is doing it. More power to them. Electric power. Because most of the shredders, balers, furnaces and mills are run by our most versatile form of energy—electricity.

Sure it's going to take a lot of power. But it's another wise use of electricity.



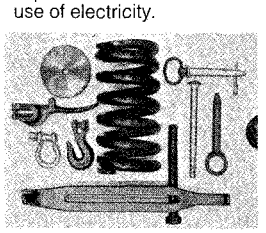
At Northstar Steel, 100% of the raw material is scrap metal which will be made into high quality new steel.

In Hydro-Arc electric furnaces, currents approaching 30,000 amps pass from each of three electrodes.



At 6000°F., alloys are added to the melted scrap, samples are checked, and the furnace is tapped.

Steel is poured into a continuous casting machine, cooled and automatically sheared to proper lengths.



Finished steel is supplied to manufacturers of basketball hoops, bolts, pliers, reinforcing bars and other products.

NSP

At NSP providing electricity is our responsibility...using it wisely is everyone's responsibility.

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Dr. Dean E. Abrahamson, Associate Professor of Anatomy and Laboratory Medicine and Physics at the University of Minnesota, is a man rated among top national authorities on power and fuel supplies. Heavily bearded, balding, wearing boots and an open-neck shirt, he seemed a man who saw very little value in answering the questions of strangers. His second floor office is a kind of knot of rooms, cluttered with machinery, books, huge cardboard boxes full of files, tables, a secretary, and what I took to be an assistant. Abrahamson gave me a document to read and while I read it he paced about the rooms conferring with the assistant, making phone calls, looking for things; the man himself seemed a tremendous reservoir of energy. The document I read was galley proofs of a forthcoming Sierra Club book, *Energy: A Crisis in Power*, edited by John Holdren and Philip Herrera. One chapter deals with the Monticello plant. I read the chapter and in general it dealt with Dean Abrahamson's role as Chairman of the Minnesota Commission for Environmental Affairs and his raising questions that apparently led to the MPCA setting its own radiation standards. It also recounted the story of the recommendations made by Dr. E. C. Tsivoglou to the MPCA, recommendations largely based on the report made to Dr. Tsivoglou by Abrahamson's commission. Abrahamson was clearly the hero in this account.

Polite but impatient, Abrahamson sat down in his office and answered questions. The answers were short, given quickly with no hesitation, the kind of answers you get from a man who knows his field.

"Will your Commission for Environmental Affairs get mixed up with the latest problem at Monticello—that business about dumping the water into the river?"

"No. That sort of thing is inevitable. When you buy reactors that's what you buy."

"What do you think of a paper called "Environmental Radiation and Human Health" by Sternglass?"

"He's qualitatively right, but his numbers are grossly in error."

"What do you think of MECCA's two demands about the Monticello plant?"

"They are sound, especially the demand that nuclear plants shut down until somebody tests emergency systems."

"Some people say MECCA is just a political organization."

"They are doing a very fine job in keeping the public aware of the dangers."

"What do you think of Gofman and Tamplin's book *Poisoned Power*? Everybody I bump into except the guys at NSP quote the book."

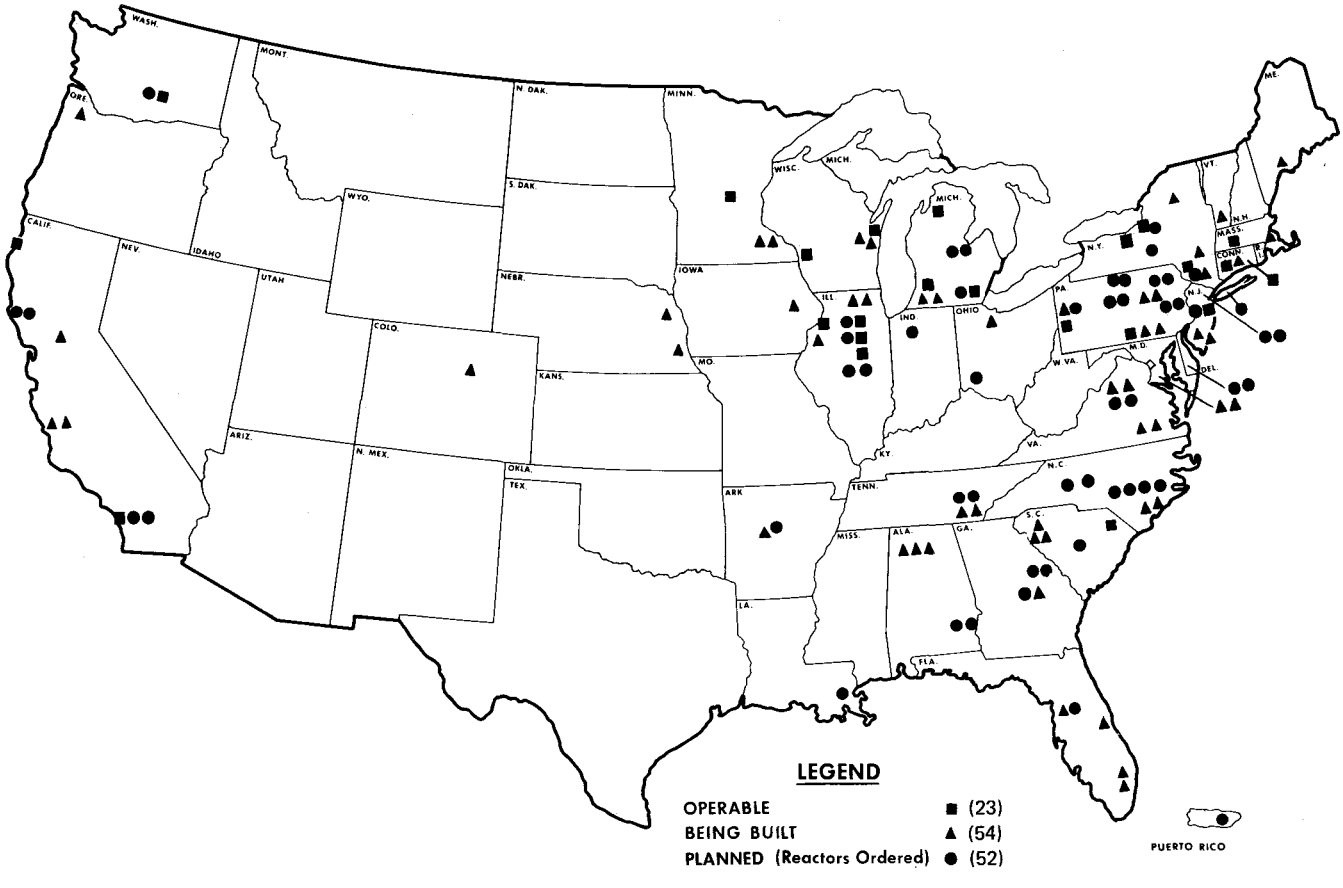
"It's a good book, but it needs editing. It's much better than Sternglass."

"Is there really a fossil fuel shortage?"

"Absolutely not. There is a shortage of natural gas, but our coal and oil reserves are sufficient to last for decades."

"Do you think fossil fuel plants are generally more desirable than nuclear plants?"

"Absolutely. Fossil fuel plants can be made very clean. There's plenty of coal to run them, although getting that



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coal out of the ground may get increasingly expensive. But we need to know a lot more about the environmental effects of nuclear power plants and the dangers in low level radiation before we play around any more."

He gave me some documents including "Environmental Releases from Steam Electric Power Plants," by Dr. Dean E. Abrahamson, and a copy of *The Nuclear Dilemma*, by Gene Bryerton.

I went back to NSP headquarters a few days later, signed the register, got my badge and took the elevator up again to see Murphy and, this time, Murphy's boss, Gene Felton, Director of Information. Though we talked for two hours the conversation simply went in circles, folding back on itself to the same questions and the same answers.

I would ask, "Do you two fellows worry at all about the things that bother Ahmed and Abrahamson and Dzugan? I mean, these people are respected scientists living here in the same city with you and they are really concerned; don't you feel any small personal reservation about the matter? Have you read Gofman and Tamplin's *Poisoned Power*?"

And they would answer that Gofman and Tamplin have been "discredited," and they would say, sure, we agree that more research is needed on the effects of radiation, but we have absolute faith in the AEC and the atomic scientific community. "To some extent everything is a chance, so we feel we might as well go ahead in this matter. You know fossil fuel plants can cause troubles too."

And I would say: "But Ahmed and Abrahamson and Dzugan *are* members of the scientific community and so is Chuck Carson, and Vogel is a well informed, articulate attorney; doesn't their concern bother you just a bit?" Probably this was a very naive approach to take when talking to public relations men, but how else do you go about it?

And they would answer: "You've just been talking to the wrong scientists and the wrong people."

So I left and drove out to Monticello.

Later, I would get a letter from Murphy saying, in part,

> When you asked whether I sincerely feel that there is no threat to health from low-level radioactive releases from the Monticello plant, I sensed that my answer disturbed you. I can honestly say that I feel entirely safe with these emissions. This is not a position which has grown out of my employment, my allegiance to NSP, or a lack of understanding of the controversy.
>
> Some people and groups who have fought tooth and nail over nuclear power in this state and throughout the country, contend that utilities do not exercise proper care or concern for the public at large. They say that our "profit motives" and our "self-serving desire to build, build, build" clouds our logic and common sense thinking. The exact opposite is true. We live here, our children are here.

An AEC map of present and future nuclear power plants. When these 129 reactors are operable (the last of them scheduled to be completed in 1982), they will provide a capacity of more than 107-million kilowatts, added to a present conventional U.S. electric utility capacity of some 350-million kilowatts. The number of planned nuclear power stations has increased by 25% during the last two years.

Monticello is a flat little town of 1600 people located right on the bank of the Mississippi river; it is enjoying unusual prosperity these days because of the power plant and the new interstate freeway that is coming through. Driving into Monticello from the east you can see the power plant two or three miles to the north. I turned north and drove to the plant site, but there was a huge sign RESTRICTED AREA—no entrance here, not even if you sign in and get a badge. So I turned around and went back to town and talked to Donald Smith, Editor of the Monticello *Times*.

Smith is a young, bearded, long haired literature major who took over the editorship of the paper from his father about six months ago. We talked for a long time and Smith was very careful to make his thinking about the plant very clear.

* NSP has carried on a careful and efficient education program in Monticello, convincing the citizens that the plant is absolutely safe.

* The NSP public relations men who come to Monticello are good guys and the people are genuinely fond of them.

* Monticello citizens are delighted with the tax relief brought by the building of the plant. The town has a new school with a swimming pool, and another new school is being built; most of the money for these schools has come from NSP taxes.

* Monticello citizens are much more apprehensive about the effects of a giant fossil fuel plant being built a few miles farther up the river than they are about the nuclear plant.

* Smith himself is a canoeist and he enjoys canoeing the river; all last summer he would canoe down the Mississippi, past the power plant when it was in operation, and he didn't notice anything different about the water from the way it was before the plant was there—no thermal pollution, nothing.

* Smith has been reading a lot lately, and he is becoming a bit uncertain about the reliability of the AEC, but he endorses the plant "with reservations." After all, he said, I have respect for the critics too; they're respected scientists and if they're worried they must have reasons.

I went across the street to a kind of dairy store and drank some milk and tried to talk to the proprietor about the power plant, but he wasn't interested in that subject at all; he told me all about the swimming pool in the new school.

If anyone reading this article thinks I am going to close with some sudden conclusion, he will be badly disappointed. Having read perhaps fifteen pounds of documents, talked to dozens of people, looked at the Monticello plant from a distance and drunk a good deal of Minneapolis water, I am no closer to a real answer than I was before I started. I think I would kind of like to be on Ahmed's side and have a comforting feeling that I was doing something to save a threatened environment. But there are too many facts and too many responsible specialists who support Murphy and Felton and the AEC and NSP to allow me honestly to join the MECCA crusade. At this point it all seems to depend on who you talk to, who you choose to believe. I just walk around saying to myself, Which Side Am I Supposed to Be On?—even though I've always hated Auden's poetry. □

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anchorites apply to one who retires to a life of solitude, esp. from religious motives; but *anchorite* commonly connotes greater austerity than *hermit*. A recluse is one who lives in seclusion, originally for religious reasons, in modern usage often because of loss of solitude or aversion to society. Anchorite adds to the idea of solitary life the implication of extreme rigor or self-mortification.

hermit-age (hûr'mĭt-tĭj), *n.* The habitation of a hermit.

Herne the Hunter (hûrn). In English popular tradition, an ancient keeper in Windsor Forest, who walked there at midnight, as a malevolent spirit, around an old oak.

hernia (hûr'nĭ-ə), *n.*; *pl.* E. -NIAS (-ə-əz), L. -NIÆ (-ē). [L.] *Med.* Protrusion of an organ or part through some opening in the walls of its cavity; rupture. — **her'ni-al** (-əl), *a.*

he'ro (hē'rō), *n.*; *pl.* -ROES (-rōz). [L. *heros*, fr. Gr. *hērōs*.] *Myth. & Relig.* A superior person, of the age or heroic age. 2. A man honored after death by public worship, for exceptional service of any kind, and usually held to be, in part at least, of divine descent. 3. The principal personage in a poem, story, or the like. 4. A person of distinguished courage or fortitude. 5. The object of central patronage in any remarkable action or event.

Hero, *n.* [L., fr. Gr. Hērō.] In Greek legend, a priestess of Aphrodite at Sestos, visited nightly by Leander, who swam the Hellespont to reach her. When he was finally drowned she cast herself into the sea.

He'ro-di-as (hē'rō-dī'ăs), *n.* *Bib.* The wife of Herod Antipas, who caused the death of John the Baptist. See SALOME.

he-ro'ic (hē-rō'ĭk), *a.* For **he-ro'i-cal** (-ĭ-kəl). 1. Resembling, or marked by, a hero; [illegible] Worthy of a hero [illegible] Larger than life but smaller than colossal. — [illegible]; [illegible] ominous. — *n.* 1. A heroic verse or poem. 2. *pl.* Extravagant expression; bombast. — **he-ro'i-cal-ly,** *adv.*

her'o-in (hĕr'ō-ĭn; hĕr'ō-ĭn), *n.* [Prob. fr. *hero*.] A white crystalline drug made from morphine and used to ease pain and quiet nervous conditions.

heroine (hĕr'ō-ĭn), *n.* [L. *heroina*, Gr. *hērōinē*.] A woman of heroic characters or qualities.

hero-ism (-ĭz'm), *n.* Qualities characteristic of a hero or heroine; display of such qualities. — Syn. See COURAGE.

heron (hĕr'ən), *n.* [fr. OF., fr. OHG.] Any of certain wading birds. See EGRET.

Heron. 1/25

her'on-ry (-rĭ), *n.*; *pl.* -RIES (-rĭz). A place where herons breed.

herpes (hûr'pēz), *n.* [L., fr. Gr. *herpēs*, fr. *herpein* to creep.] *Med.* Any of various acute inflammatory affections of the skin and mucous membrane, marked by clusters of vesicles which tend to spread. — **her-pet'ic** (hûr-pĕt'ĭk), *a.*

her'pe-to'lo-gy (hûr'pē-tŏl'ō-jĭ), *n.* [Gr. *herpeton* reptile + -logy.] Zoölogy relating to reptiles. — **-to'lo-gist,** *n.*

herring (hĕr'ĭng), *n.* [AS. *hǣring*.] A small fish caught in great numbers in the North Atlantic. It swims in schools.

hers (hûrz), *pron.* The form of the possessive *her* used absolutely, that is, without a following noun.

her-self' (hûr-sĕlf'), *pron.* An emphasized form for *her*, *she*.

her'ship (hûr'shĭp), *n.* A warlike raid or forray, esp. to steal cattle. *Scot., Ulster, or Irish.*

Hertz-ian (hĕrt'sĭ-ən), *a.* Of or pertaining to the German physicist Heinrich Hertz. — **Hertzian waves,** electric waves. — **Hertz** was the first to investigate them systematically.

Hesione (hē-sī'ō-nē), *n.* [L., fr. Gr. *Hēsionē*.] *Gr. Myth.* A daughter of Laomedon, king of Troy, rescued from a sea monster by Hercules.

hesitancy (hĕz'ĭ-tən-sĭ) | *n.* Hesitation; indecision. ⇒

hes'i-tan-cy (-tăn-sĭ) | Syns. See HESITATION.

hes'i-tant (-tənt), *a.* Hesitating. — **hes'i-tant-ly,** *adv.*

hes'i-tate (hĕz'ĭ-tāt), *v. i.*; -TATED (-tā'tĕd); -TATING. [F. *hésiter*, intens. fr. *hæsitare* to hesitate, stick fast.] 1. To stop; pause; be in uncertainty. 2. To falter in speaking. — *v. t.* To utter with, or intimate by, hesitation.

Syn. HESITATE, FALTER, WAVER, imply irresolution or uncertainty. HESITATE is the general term; FALTER often used of a trembling backwardness of speech; suggests wavering in purpose or action; SEMIOUS now implies a taking exception to something.

a preceding comma, is used: as, this gent[illegible] the gentlem[illegible] *who* was here yesterday desires to see you [illegible] knock at t[illegible] first door *that* you find open.

whoa (hō). Stop! stand! Hold! [illegible]

who'ever (hōō-ĕv'ər), *pron.* Whatever person; whos[illegible]

whole (hōl), *n.* [AS. *hāl* well, sound.] 1. Possessing, or in a state of, health and soundness; well; sound; [illegible] healed. 2. Not broken; undiminished, undamaged. 3. Containing the total amount, number, etc.; [illegible] PERFECT, [illegible] a *total* eclipse, [illegible] *total*, that all are present and taken together as an aggregate; as, a *whole* week; the *total* amount. Entire and total do not necessarily imply parts. *Entire* (or in a few phrases, *whole*) describes an object as continuous or unbroken; *complete* refers to it as without deficiency or having attained the limit of its development; as, an *entire* day; an *entire* specimen; *complete* combustion, a *complete* revolution of the sun. Perfect lays greater stress than *complete* on the possession of consummate excellence or freedom from blemish or defect; that is PERFECT which is left entire or unimpaired; as, a *perfect* circle, crystal, illustration; the figure of Hercules *intact*. The same object may be, according to the point of view, at once *whole*, *complete* and *entire*; as, a *whole* bridge may be shipped in parts, but it is not *entire* till the parts are put together, nor *complete* so long as anything remains to be done.

whole-note, *Music,* a semibreve. — **whole number,** *Math.,* an integer. — *n.* 1. The entire thing; the entire assemblage of parts; totality. 2. A regular combination of parts; a system. Syn. See SUM. — **whole'ness,** *n.*

wholesale (hōl'sāl), *n.* Sale of goods by the piece or large quantity; — distinguished from *retail*. — **by wholesale,** in the mass; hence, without distinction or discrimination. — *a.* 1. Of, or engaged in, trade by the piece or large quantity; selling to retailers or jobbers rather than consumers. 2. Extensive and indiscriminate.

whole'some (-sŭm), *a.* [*whole* + *-some*.] 1. Sound; healthy. *Obs. or R.* 2. Salubrious. 3. Characteristic of bodily health. 4. Promoting, or characteristic of, health of mind, morals, character, etc.; sound. 5. Profitable; advantageous. *Obs. or R. or Archaic.* — Syn. See HEALTHFUL. — **whole'some-ly,** *adv.* — **whole'some-ness,** *n.*

wholly (hōl'ĭ; hōl'lĭ), *adv.* 1. In a whole or complete manner; entirely; completely. 2. Exclusively; fully.

whom (hōōm), *pron.* [AS. *dative hwām, hwǣm*.] Objective (dative or accusative) of *who*.

[illegible] *pron.* Objective of *whosoever*.

whoo'bub (hōō'bŭb), [illegible] var. of HUBBUB.

whoop [illegible] OF. *houper*, fr. *houpe*, interj., a whoop, or loud cry, as of eagerness, enthusiasm, or enjoyment; shout; hallo; hoot. 2. To make whoop (in sense 3 below). — *v. t.* To call, drive, insult, etc., with whoops. — *n.* 1. A shout or cry, as of joy, pursuit, exultation, etc. 2. A hoot, or cry, as of an owl or crane. 3. The characteristic sonorous inspiration which follows paroxysm of coughing in whooping cough. — **whooping cough,** an infectious disease, usually of children, characterized by a violent, convulsive cough and [illegible]

whop (hŏp), **whap** (hăp), *v. t.* [illegible] thump, whack. 2. To [illegible] or [illegible] turn [illegible] heavily; hop. — *n.* 1. Stroke; [illegible] Bump [illegible] 3. Noise of a blow. *Dial. Eng. & Scot.*

[illegible], whopper (hwŏp'ər), *n.* Something enormous [illegible] or firm of its kind [illegible] etc. *Colloq.*

whore (hōr). [AS. *hōre*.] A harlot. — *v. t.* To make [illegible] for hire; [illegible] lewdness. — *v. i.* To [illegible] in unchaste lewdness. — **whoremaster** (-măs'tər), *n.* [illegible] — **whoremonger** (-mŭng'gər), *n.* [illegible]

☞ *Whore* and its derivatives are not now in decent use.

whor'ish (hōr'ĭsh), *a.* Of or like a whore; unchaste. — **whor'ish-ly,** *adv.* — **whor'ish-ness,** *n.* 1. The practice of unchastity; sexual intercourse. 2. *Bib.* Idolatry.

whoremaster (-măs'tər), *n.* 1. A man who practises lewdness; lecher. 2. One who keeps or procures whores.

whoremonger (-mŭng'gər), *n.* A whoremaster; lecher.

whor'ling (-lĭng), *n.* A bastard; *Colloq.*, a low, scurvy [illegible] *Archaic.*

whorl [illegible] organ [illegible] flowers, or inflorescences [illegible] of the verticils, or whorls, of [illegible] shell. — **whorled** (hwôrld, hwŏrld), *a.*

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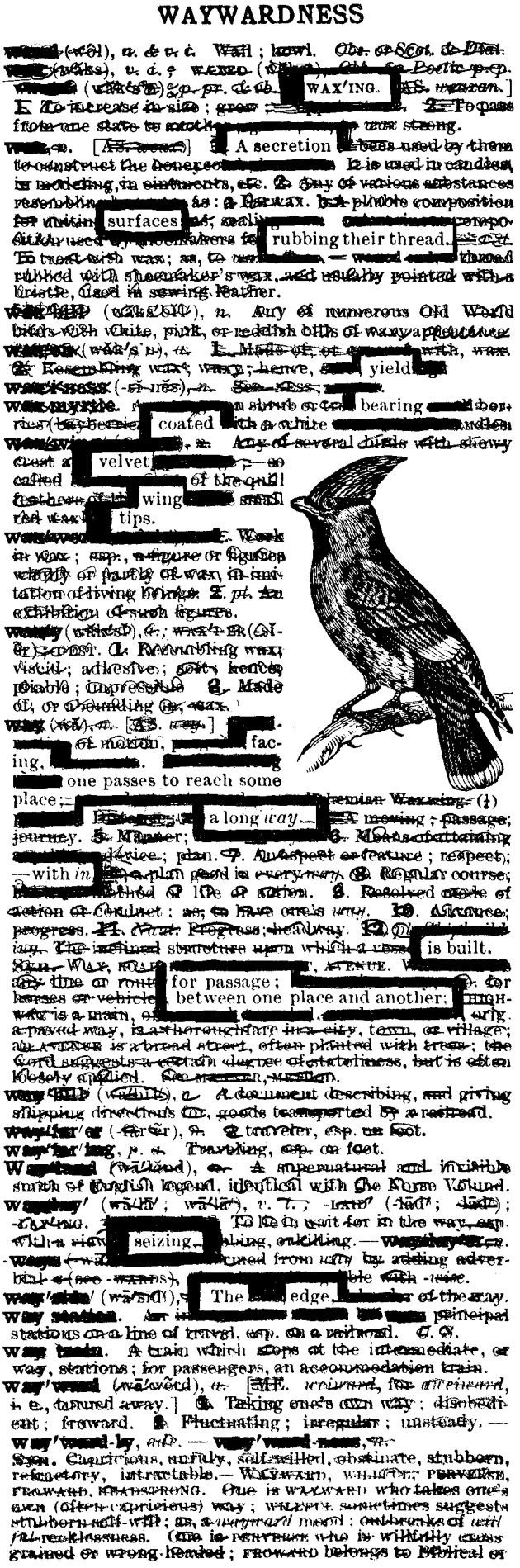
WAYWARDNESS
WAX'ING.
velvet
tips.
a long *way*
one passes to reach some
for passage;
between one place and another;
seizing,
surfaces
rubbing their thread.
coated
wing
of the quill
The
edge,
principal
stations on a line of travel, esp. on a railroad. C. S.
Syn. Capricious, sullen, self-willed, obstinate, stubborn, refractory, intractable.— WAYWARD, WILLFUL, PERVERSE, FROWARD, HEADSTRONG. One is WAYWARD who takes one's own (often capricious) way; WILLFUL sometimes suggests stubborn self-will; as, a *wayward* mood; outbreaks of *willful* recklessness. One is PERVERSE who is willfully cross-grained or wrong-headed; FROWARD belongs to Biblical or

THE FABULIST

Kenneth Lash

The Whore & The Hero

A PREFACE

Suppose a man only married whores. After all, Raskolnikov really had something going for him with that Sonia. The coolness of the trade. Somebody to go right up to the bar and get served, without even pounding on it.

Whereas the Hero is always hot and thirsty without a dime in his pocket or else he's lost his voice somewhere.

But he's a Hero just the same. That's established. Then what does he want Her for? You mean he isn't a Hero till he meets Her? Like Adam?

A likely story.

Simply: either he wants to get well (catharsis) or he wants to get sick (pity, fear, syphilis).

To get well, you die. According to man's most intricate thought.

So what's a Hero about wanting to get well?

The Hero is, that he wants to get sick. Must be. Syllogism.

And that, my friend, is where the Whore comes in. Here she comes. And not just out of Babylon.

Out of knowing what's good for you.

Someone to draw you out, for instance. The thing being, she can't very well tell you *Her* story. She'll be sick of that sort of thing. What's new, is worming out yours. Which in itself makes everything possible.

Again simply: you can't be a Hero without an audience. And if it's a female audience, you already *are* one.

What happened at work today, dear?

* * *

I'll tell you a story. A man was passing through the desert, alone, following an old camel-path. For days he had

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not seen a soul, not even a bird. Suddenly, just over the rise of a dune, he encountered a girl. She gave him a cool drink, and solicited him. He told her he was married but separated, and very disturbed about it. To tell the truth, it was in an attempt to see things clearly that he had set about walking the desert. The girl looked up and down the camel-path, and since no one seemed to be coming she opened her parasol and invited him to tell his story, which he did, leaving out nothing. Time passes quickly on such occasions, and the man was truly amazed to find he'd talked the night through, and dawn itself was approaching. He must also have felt shamefaced, because as he made to go he offered the girl some money for her time, in fact urged it on her. No, she said; a person may sell his work, but must never sell his time. He praised her and was about to depart when abruptly over the rise of the dune, loping down at them, came a lion. Having no weapon save Christian gratitude, he threw the girl down upon the sands with himself on top, hoping to protect her, perhaps even hide her from the beast. The lion, however, with only the merest glance from the side of one eye as he passed, padded on down the camel-path as if late for an appointment. Prone on the sand and absolutely still, they watched him disappear across the desert, the bumping of their hearts, one against the other, gradually subsiding. Only to start up again with great thumps as the thrill of danger, instead of disappearing, suddenly transformed itself and came in at another door. This time they were not spared. Later, when the man again made ready to depart, he offered the girl his hand in friendship. That will be 14 shekels, she said. He paid, and started off again through the desert, trying harder than ever to see things clearly. He had gone hardly half a kilometer before he met the lion, sauntering back along the path and comfortably swishing its tail, as if on Sunday promenade. This time, to his horror, the man found himself exhausted of all action. He froze in his shoes. The lion, without a hitch in its sunny stride, again brushed past him, turning its great shaggy head only enough to clap him an immense wink out of the left eye. The man turned and watched the lion lope back toward the girl. King of beasts indeed, he shouted, putting his hands on his hips.

* * *

It's easy enough to laugh if you start talking about Oedipus. Or get around some other way to saying that *all* women are.

But if you do that you're leaving out the difference between the Whore Afterwards and the Whore Before. The Whore Afterwards is nothing. Zero. Fate.

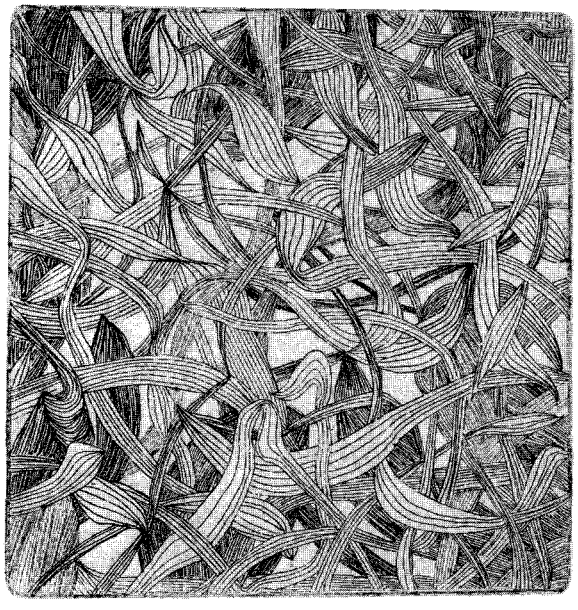
But the Whore Before. Who *knows*. Who is one before she is one.

And for whom that foreknowledge is the thing!

Not the act the climax. Not even the look, the lisp, the humming under the underwear.

No. The foreknowledge, pure and simple. Simple because it so, uncluttered, *knows*. Pure because it is always there always the same, let it be you, me, or nobody at all. Nobody! Nobody at all.

What does foreknowledge need of anybody?



Anybody is anticlimax, like death is for the Hero. So the Hero, if he is one, doesn't go toward death or family reunions, but toward pure simple foreknowledge, that doesn't need him and so might spare him.

Toward what is sufficient-unto-itself, which is what *he* isn't or else how the hell did he get to be a Hero?

So there she is and he looks at her and feels Life.

And she looks at him and he's got no surprises for her.

(I cite great ladies, great ladies all.)

Which is perfectly all right and she smiles, like a wind through a wind-chime.

And that, Sir, is when he marries Her. If he really *is* a Hero.

* * *

Of course, if he settles down with Her she'll kill him, as she must. And not as a Hero. As a fact.

There he is, with that bee in his bonnet. Whether it's about a cup or a fish or his father—whatever it is, it's always the same damned thing on his mind, day in day out. Until finally he becomes that thing, and goes around being it all the time, without let-up. Which is the definition of a fact. Frozen stiff. Try holding hands with it and right away you feel like coughing.

Unless you happen to be one yourself, a fact is only good for whatever you need it for. And she doesn't need it for very much. And certainly not for very long. The minute he, so to speak, comes true, he has done what was really necessary. And all that is not really necessary is boring, give it whatever name you will.

So if he's got other business and knows it, he flees. He calls it going away and says he'll return, and she says it's divorce desertion and villainy, and she cries, but when he's gone, fleeing, already thinking her Oasis and yearning backward, she smiles.

And awaits the next who knows the unquenchable difference. Not Her hero, but Hero, on his way. □

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GEORGE KEITHLEY

THE HOUSES IN HELL

The houses in hell have flaming pink walls
a flower box and pinewood doors
where brass lips on the mail slots open
for a letter of hope. . .
Settled into the dark
of mid-day on the porch
the cats curl and dream like piles of socks.

We watch our parents pass
among tall elms on the lawn
circling under the trees in lakes of grass
and it is late
in the grey afternoon
when the dead limbs are pruned.
The debris is dragged away to be burned.

Quiet and cool
the evening comes
and the storm strikes.
Lightning leaps in the trees.
The thunder rumbles into the roots
and the anxious cats claw against the door.
They are so helpless that they huddle on the floor.

Very soon we have grown to admire
their small hearts;
when they tremble with fear
how they rise and fall
with the very breath of heaven
and we envy even
the fire in their fur that warms our hands.

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The Woman's Voice in Modern Norwegian Poetry

Six Poets Translated by F. H. König

Halldis Moren Vesaas

IF NOW TONIGHT—

Heavy and tired is my heart tonight,
it carries a heavy burden.
I cover my face with my hands,
and sit here thinking only about my heart
and how heavy it is.

Thus all the straws in the fields now are bent
with full ears of grain,
thus every branch is bent under the weight of fruit.
Is my heart, perhaps, too weak for its crop?
Thank you, oh glorious summer
for everything that grows.

If now tonight my heart should cease
to beat—
I know: when those who love me
come to carry away my corpse—
in my broken eyes, my extinguished smiles,
in my opened cold hands
the light of my luck and happiness
will emerge and shine on them, warm and clear,
and all their weeping then shall stop.

THE TREE

Look at the tree.

Lonely it stands there, naked
in the cold, yellowish pale dusk of March
with a sharp edge of frozen snow
around its foot.

The other trees around here on the plain
stand sagging behind stiff needles
and sleep safe in their winter.
But this one is different.

For this one alone is naked
and waits for leaves.
The buds sit like drops
tightly along each twig.
Alert and awake, motionless
the tree stands and carries its treasure
with a shimmer as soft as pearls
around it from root to crown.

Don't come closer,
it still has to be quiet some time here,
no one must wake up here yet,
but soon, soon—
thus the soft shimmer is wrapped
lightly like happy dreams
around the sleeping life.

All on our earth which carries buds
and knows its fulfillment is near
carries this shimmer
of waiting and quiet and dream.

So strange to have seen this tree.

So good to have been this tree
—and to be it, for still another morning.

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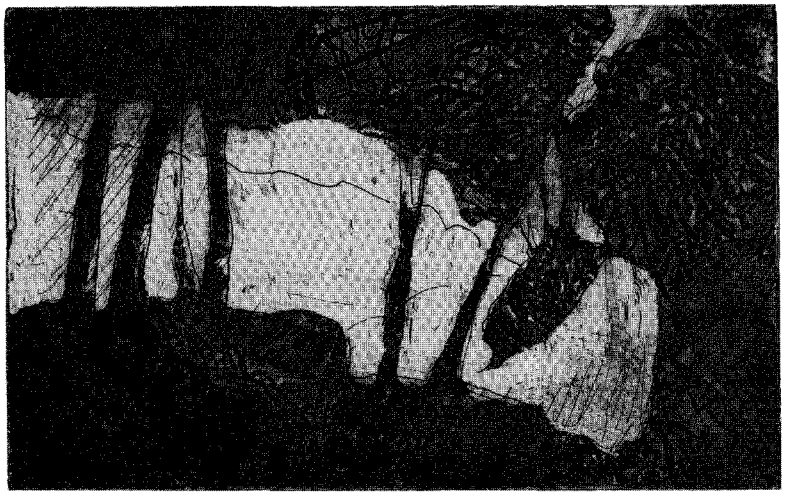

HALLDIS MOREN VESAAS was born in 1907, published her first book of poems in 1929, and is still active today. She is the daughter of poet Sven Moren, and was married to the prominent author Tarjei Vesaas (d. 1970).

THE BIRDS

All day long I listened
to the rushing wings over my head.
High in the sun-blue air
a flock of birds flew their unburdened flight.
Today I thought once
that one of them was sinking down
as if wanting to be my guest.

I thought I heard a pair of wings
standing out among the others
rowing hastily toward me.
Thus among all of them
was a bird that was mine and I opened
every door, every window in my home.

Perhaps it was only a small, grey bird,
but with bright eyes and warm, soft feathers
and driven by impatience
toward the heart that waited just for him,
as a dry river-bed
waits to be flooded.
- - -

Closer, closer the sound of wings,
like a beating heart
—stopping suddenly; was the bird
standing still on my roof?

Then fresh sounds, as if the heart
started to beat again,
but faster now and fainter
and farther and farther away

until it swings around anew:
the rush of a thousand beating wings.
I know now that the bird will
not roost with me today.
- - -

Dusk falls. High in the sun-red air
the passage of birds as before.
Down here the shadows have taken my house.
It still is waiting with open windows
and open door.

My feet are heavy
and tied to the earth.
Soon I can no longer glimpse the birds
that freely roam the air.

But now when they swing around again
they burst out in song
so that the evening sun glows warmer.

Who are you who dared call
one of these birds your own . . .

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ASTRID TOLLEFSEN (born 1897) made her poetic debut only after World War II, but during the last 25 years has published a dozen collections of her work.

Astrid Tollefsen

IN THE BEGINNING

Creep forth in the light
blood on hands and knees
face hidden by hair
sun, sand and stone hurt
grass is sharp but cool
shouts far away
no one is coming
The sunset brings wind
and dew-like light rain
the first night
is outstretched rest
with face turned up
to the still stars
the first cock's crow
a flash in a dark dream
The first sunrise
spears of light in the eyes
steps on grass are fear
shadow is safety
hands are closeness
a mouth is soft
cool as dewdrops
hot
Thirst
kindles the first
word of the mute
Friend!

THE LETTER

Not an outstretched hand
just very quiet words
like a child's almost unnoticeable movement
to come closer
when it walks among adults
in a shadow-filled evening.

FATUM

If you knew the name
you could whisper it
shout it
see it written
in the rippling water-surface
in the shadows of leaf-heavy branches
hear it sung
by river
wind
bird.

The name however
does not whisper
does not shout
before it grows darker
and the sea starts to rise.

BONJOUR MONSIEUR GAUGUIN

The morning
is without colors and lights
since the eyes are blinded
by the night's flaming straw-wisps
A woman's voice subdued by the morning
soft with wishes
heavy breathing
against ash-grey embers
The hidden hands
squeeze tubes of paint, squeeze—
The sand-path turns red, the fence closes in
the view wanders off into the blue
into a cold and naked morning
But the tracks in the grass

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Astrid Hjertenaes Andersen

ASTRID HJERTENAES ANDERSEN was born in 1915. She has defined her poetical activity as the "search for a state of forgetting and freedom."

Gustav Vigeland's * WOMAN AND REPTILE

Why don't you fight, woman?

Mother of a people,
you let your breasts rest
in sweet sensuality
against the reptile's slimy limbs
you let its animal hands
clasp your loins.

Has your arm ever been lifted in fight?
It does not carry the spark of willpower
in its gentle rounding.

Dulled are the senses
mirrored
in a feeble smile,
the tired inclination
of your head.

Was there a fight before
in which you could not cope?
Did you have to surrender—
And was the resistance
only an enraptured gesture,
joyous despair you enjoyed
because your nature delights in strength—
handsome or ugly.

A frightful stillness
exudes from the granite-embrace.
A grotesque peace:
she who bore a people
he who destroyed all life.

Is this friendship
your eternal truth—
Shall the sun of all mornings
shine on such a shameful symbol?

Why don't you fight, woman?

* *A Norwegian sculptor, especially interested in the dynamics of the human body; his sculptures and gigantic arrangements of human bodies bristle with potential energy, usually caught in a posture symbolic of basic human behavior and life (the angry child, motherly love, the determination of the provider, etc.) Most of his work is collected in* Vigelandsparken *in Oslo.*

THE POET RECITES HIS OWN POEM

I
The poet squirms on the straw mat
The eyes wander and cross.

He would like to walk backwards into the sea
to be a rolling echo
from the cliff-breast of the night.

He would like to be quiet and mute
like the chalk-white moon in the dark,

like one of the other petrified,
dancing, egg-white moons
out there in the hall of the night.

But a warbling bird-sound
presses up through his throat.

A bird is sitting on the branch of his heart
doomed to survive.

II
The poet turns to the left
as against an invisible wall.

The poet turns to the right
as if dancing with his own shadow.

Now he stops breathing.
Now he drinks rain.
Now he stands on his toes
with morning wind 'round his ankles.
Now he grows like a tree
with trunk and rustling crown.

Success: He sees again the blood-rusty fields
and the brain's fossil on the desolate beach.

He recognizes the strip of grass he stands on
and the nightly contours where two embrace.

Success: A bird is sitting on his shoulder
It flew away in a landscape of stillness and light.

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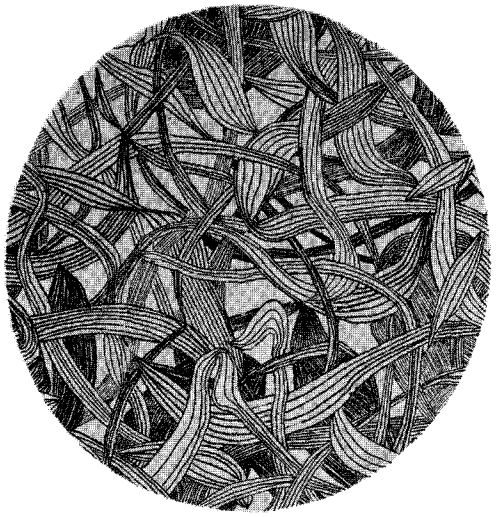

Marie Takvam

MARIE TAKVAM (b. 1926) frequently turns to city life for her subject matter. The critic Inger Heiberg has noted that "she seems to look for harmony, in words and life."

MY SHIP

My ship is bound for a dark harbor
which the stars once mentioned–
The sea lifts it up high
but throws it regretfully down into the depths–
there the waves crash over my head–

I am sick–sick of life and afraid of the
unknown night–
Mighty ocean–lift up my ship to the day
so that once more I may laugh at my fear and
my dizzy soul–

Lift me up you great ocean, fill my ship
with glossy-bellied fish,
you fill my soul with crazy thoughts, wild ecstasy–
You pull me to your heart and push me
away again
like an unwanted child.

I know one day you will crash my ship
chew it between pointed white teeth–
Then my soul will be drawn
to your cold breast
and my song will emerge like debris for thieves
on weathertorn beaches.
Almighty ocean, you crash my ship
but my soul has sent up signals to the stars.

WRITING

Chinese writing.
Birch twigs in snow.
Naked brambles on a whitewashed wall.
Cyrillic writing.
Latin writing.
Obelisks with hieroglyphs.
To touch the keys on a typewriter
without taking time to think about the process.
Words. Letters.
Nothing.
Braids on white sheets.
Ornaments from brain-convolutions
through a network of blood, nerves, to skin
to the machine.
No chisel. No pencil, no goose-quill.
A lump of nerves
a machine
a white, clean sheet.

STREET

She bewitches us. Smells of the dying day.
Flickering neon-blue shadows on the forehead.
She is your breath, your heartbeat. Your screeching brakes
are her mad laughter.
Her kisses taste asphalt.
Eyes filled with mud and rain.
Fingers with money, paper rustling
round the hips . . .
Grey skin stretched over your body.
Creatures rise up from the depths
touch her, sink back into darkness.
Street-bodies, hard, still, driven by
isolation, gliding in the traffic
without collisions.

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NORWAY

MARIE TAKVAM

In bread and cod liver oil lies our most sacred sacrament.
We are closer to Greenland than to Jerusalem
now and forever.
Norwegian exhibition of kinetic art:
Flaming tongues of northern lights
over enormous darkroom-vaults
glittering hallucinations
incomprehensibly psychedelic
dying abruptly
and man sees small pinhead-diamonds freezing
on the blue stretched silk
over the suburbs' Nirvana:
marriages compressed by concrete.
Cranes lift iron beams, pipes,
long straws in their pelican-bills, hard nests.
People come from fjords and mountains—
clot together, slip into eighty square yards,
are pressed into blocks as well as
can be expected with such material.

A DAY IN LATE FALL

The horizon draws tight around me
like a choke chain.
The dust from the road flies in through open windows.
The heavy doors are warped
and squeak when I try to open them,
with soft but persevering cries.
The horizon moves steadily closer to the house
darkness and winter and cold dust outside.
A grave. I can barely look over the edge
sometimes
to other graves.
White faces, life celebrates winter.
Stiff limbs.
Soon snow will fall
and cover us all
mercifully.

WARNING

Why try the sirens just now
with long piercing screams?
Is it the idea to fix in my mind
the house with us inside in eternal, Pompeian rest,
as we are in this second:
You, so indifferent with your blue cup and
your slippers halfway kicked off.
I with a paper in my hand,
in an almost worn-out dress,
a typical housewife-corpse.

A glowing mass, a crash, a flash
and the perfect grave.
Body close to body, faces turned away.
Thus we could be dug out from our
workingday, we two.
Interesting for tourists of another time?
Why try the sirens just now?

CURTAINS III
(as seen year after year from a streetcar)

Thin white crepe put up
after the wedding
greying slowly from soot and dust, blackening slowly
the landscape grows darker
everything without clear red green blue
knowing perhaps, suspecting
but the crepe is greying, greying day in and day out
year after year
over hair and skin
one day draped 'round a banner
without golden letters
held over flowers
black crepe, black from burning, exhaust, soot, dust
black from burnt-out energy
that never flamed high
just fizzled out, cold
behind crepe after the wedding.

University of Tulsa
McFarlin Library
Tulsa, Oklah—

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MARIE TAKVAM

THE MYSTERY OF THE WISE SWAMPS

I saw how he wore down his finger nails,
digging and digging toward deeper and deeper depths
into the mystery of the wise swamps.

Skulls he lifted triumphantly to the light,
skeletons of frightening gigantic beasts and broken wings–
Through reeds and swamp grass his wife and younger
daughter
waded to the rim of his wide grave.
–I said I was a reporter and asked the wife:
what does he expect to find?

I don't know much about old swamps
but about the origin of man–said the woman
–deep in the darkness of my body,
a swamp of blood and slime,
I feel man creeping into the world.
Deep in the eyes of my younger daughter
I dimly perceive the seed of religions–
I recognize fear and the magic of darkness.

The same wind that ruffles my hair
blows through the swamp grass and touches the thousand
skeletons.
The same hunger I feel in my body
drove the hundred vultures to the deer that fell.

The little I know about swamps and archeological finds
the wind has sung to me, the child has told without words
and the law of hunger in my own body
condemned me to understand.

Now I gather swamp grass,
spin adventures around
these cold bones.

POST FESTUM, MOTHER EUROPE

It was night
and became light
over empty, dirty glasses
cigarette butts 'round an ash-filled tray
wax drops on the tablecloth under the iron candlestick
dust, records without their jackets
Kathleen Ferrier, The Beatles
in crazy uniforms . . . soft drink bottles
gin bottles . . .

It was night
and became light
over men, still sleeping
in black clothes
with outstretched arms
on white sheets
on temporary mattresses
the postures resemble
outspread wings,
wings spread for flight
or stiffened attempts to embrace
something gigantic,
no, the postures, as they lie now
unfortunately remind me of black crosses
on white snow . . .
a war-cemetery
what kind of war?
On such a morning, mother Europe
forgive your fallen children,
they will soon rise, will want some milk.

THE HERMIT'S TALE

I went down to the farmsteads to gather wood for a fire
which could give me warmth up here
to spin wool from the sheep that ran past into threads
to bear words with me into my loneliness.
Words I could play with during long evenings,
whisper them to myself, hold them up to the flames
to see whether they glitter.
Hard old words can stand light from all sides.
The sunlight gives them a soul and they blind my eyes
with tears.
They are too pure for mortals to bear,
created for temples.

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KATE NAESS is the youngest (born in 1938) of the poets represented here, and the most versatile, working with both conventional and concrete forms. She is probably the most promising of Norway's contemporary lyric poets.

Kate Naess

DOORS

Running
in and out of green
swinging doors
You
not hearing
The call
which is held back and bangs
under the lamps
in the hallways
Hatches out fables
which force their way
through images of
ultimate presence
And always expected
and seen through the door
in the next in the next in the next room
that–which–could–have–happened

THE STARS

The last star
that yesterday lay in the grass, glittering,
has gone.
I counted three
a long time ago.

"The first one
was a marking stone
on the way to my house,

the second was a light
for you
who searched for me in the dark,

the third
was the golden coin
you gave as payment to have me."

The star
which lay in your outstretched hand
vanished yesterday.
Today you have given me back
three pale stones.

SOAP

ten fingers clutch this
which for the moment is reality
want to carve a piece of truth into stone
but slip on the right and the left side
try to swim after it in the water
but it glides away grows
smaller and smaller
like a piece of
soap

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KATE NAESS

WEDNESDAY

one had black hair and blue eyes
one had red hair and grey eyes:
they were cold
one had a blue hat a blue coat and
a blue and white polka-dotted dress
one wore very nice clothes
what they thought about
were not international problems
or national problems
they thought about love

one had perhaps light hair but was a student
one had light hair and was a worker
the one with the light hair wore a purple dress
the one who studied was not permitted to pour coffee
the one who worked wanted to set the table
what they thought about
was not love
but big problems

one had a sad face and cold eyes and was lonely
one was tall and handsome and had indifferent eyes
one had many parties and was friendly
and medium tall and dark-haired and well-dressed
the one who had a sad face was sorry that
the one who was tall had disappeared
and the one who was medium tall was a little more
worried than normal
the one who was lonely
only thought
and felt

the one who had red hair and grey eyes
was glad because the one who studied was glad
and thought that the one who perhaps had red hair
felt that the one who wore very nice clothes
thought about love
and felt that the one with the sad face
was offered a cigarette by the one who was medium tall
and worked and had black hair and studied but
had difficulties with being tall and handsome
and disappeared with blue coat and blue hat
and was friendly and had many parties but
indifferent eyes and set the table
and actually had light hair and a white polka-dotted dress
and was lonely and had much money
did not think about national problems
or international problems
but only about big problems
thought about love
thought
and felt

STRANGE

I don't know why
but in the middle of the night
I opened the window
there in fact is something
in the middle of the street
in slippers
I think at once:
waiting for the weather to change
no walks in his sleep no
is probably waiting for a taxi cab
for himself or
someone else—
stands there
white-haired decrepit blurred
without taking hold of anything
with arm and head in the direction of travel
only standing there
the face turning to and fro
an outdoor posture
stays put
without an apparent alibi
it doesn't get lighter
no one comes
he or she finally gave up
shuffled toward the entranceway
didn't manage to wait any longer
perhaps courageous
I didn't know any better myself
I shut the window

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THE BIRD OF FIRE

KATE NAESS

The birds shrink from
the black blades of grass
where the fire burnt
they fly with loud cries
to the spring–
But the night is raven black
and is mirrored
in the bottomless depths of the spring–
The bird of fire bends down
and drinks
but sinks into the night
when the spring's wide-open eye
breaks–

FIRE DANCE

I
Here now flame
fire and face
blend with heels
The dress's train ring and stone are kindled
The flame infects the embers
The rhythm starts to take over the hands

II
Suddenly fear spreads over her face
Now she tries to keep the evil from her
by not turning away

She tries to remember:
Did she live on the shadow-side
opening the door and window
to let in sun and light

She tries to forget:
Did she close door and window in the summer
not to let in the dust

She is mistaken:
She is right
At arm's length she keeps the lamps and the time
while trifles and shadows pile up at her feet
Unknowingly she collects fuel

III
Now
the threats emerge
Images swerve out of the field of vision
She charges herself up and brakes
so as not to skid out of her mind

The face of revenge has cunningly changed expression
The evil is evoked and burns
Heels clatter
Hands flow into each other
The masks have thrown their masks
The dress's train sweeps aside all doubts

Is she intact
With ashes under her eyes
Is she capable of lugging water
to the fire she is lost in

She never sees the threats
But:
Fear The room The scorched feet The smoke
are here and now
The dance that started and continues
The fire which rushes
to every place where oil appears

WHAT THE BOATS WANT

it should be nice to go out
with storm and bad weather being your friends
allied with the fog-factories
bad luck good enough
that's what the boats want
to withdraw from it all
to dive down into their own notion
of security
to rest on the bottom

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KATE NAESS

THE SHOT

Without tears
until the wind ceased
hurling its spears of rain.
Without worry-lines
until the sun bent its bow
and took aim.
The winterday landscape
lame with impenetrable stillness
hiding a bird beneath branches
of grey frozen cobweb.

Stand still
fading moment,
do not awaken death
in cradles of melting ice.
Turn back—
breathe out the new shot
and the red drop
that glitters on the bird's wing.

Turn back—
sink toward the forgotten years.
Sink until you know not
where you are
in the landscape that lay here
threatening, mute
before the sun
lifted its bow and shot.

P. S.

the certificate is written the cause is clear
hair is to be combed hands to be folded
the mirror is held up no sign of moisture
but after the poison loses its effect
I will get up take off the clothes and wash them
hang them out on the balcony to dry in the sun
so you can see that I live

AUGUST EVENING

One evening in August
the moon came sailing
with golden coins of fall
and dropped them tinkling on the gravel.
A shadow glided from the sky
and mirrored itself in glass-clear water
and froze to ice.
Slowly time drifts back,
Small things come toward me:
Empty houses with fragrances of forgotten summers,
a whispering of dark memories and tall trees,
the wind chasing waves over wheatfields,
silence by a river that runs on
and small steps in the grass
of something that comes closer
and emerges on the window glass
among the thousand eyes of the night.
Something knocks on my door,
something breathes gently outside,
time grows and fills my senses
with dizzying certainty . . .
A child laughs out loud, a tiny brittle sound.
Locked is my forgotten world,
everything as before
but outside a child walks and laughs with delight
about white birds, flying toward fall.

DIALOG

In your garden
withering flowers grow.

There I pick golden leaves.
There I break young trees.

In your realm
dusk prevails.

Who watches me blow out the light.
Who watches me gather the dust.

In your world
eternal silence rules.

No one knows that I stop the wind
and hear the stillness grow.

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Gunvor Hofmo

GUNVOR HOFMO was born in 1921. Though her view of poetry is similar to Andersen's, the tone of her work is generally more pessimistic.

DEEP IN THE DAY

Deep in the day you are now—
where everything looks at you with wide, wondering bird-
eyes
through a wet veil of greenery,
and the day's chill deepens
like the coolness of a hand closing around a nest's warmth.
And naked beings rise in soft weightlessness:
women carry water with sunken shoulders,
in their bodies the climbing rhythm of toil
like the horse's nodding head uphill on a stony road.

And men slowly turn to and fro with their hoes
on a wet day in fall
with backs like drawn bows—
yes, be with them!
Be with these sunken shoulders,
these drawn bows
these movements of the hoes through a grey day!
Where dew-clear beauty trickles
over the smoothness of the skin.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW . . .

What do you know about death,
weeping about it as an irreality outside you,
as a grave, a coffin!
Death is no flirting with tears,
no harbor for your defeat.
Death is broken eyes turned into consciousness inside you,
Death is cells oozing with blood which are part of you,
death is God filling the universe with his depths,
rocking his children in infinite silence
while everything listens,
death is greying houses deep in the twilight
and winds that blow from all the world's grief,
and all the beauty,
death is tenderness without a name in bursting buds
and a bird that flies . . .

THE LAST WORDS

The last words,
with the throat turned to fall-fevers
which no rain can quench!
The last words
a building I raise
in the rain's darkness—no time to wait!
A witness for eternity and
the past's dark meaning
before the dead whisper:
Too late, too late!

Translated from the Norwegian by F. H. Kŏnig

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Thomas H. Thompson/Peter Cooley/Robert Phillips

A Mock Encounter

Beyond Freedom and Dignity, by B. F. Skinner. Knopf. $6.95

The reviewer of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* has to face up to an embarrassing problem before he writes a single word. The question before him is: How is he going to take this book—as a serious scientific treatise or as a piece of semi-serious utopian science fiction? Since B. F. Skinner comes before the reader trailing clouds of psychological glory based on his apparently sound, even preëminent standing among his psychological peers, the reviewer is tempted to call upon his psychological expertise and try to do a responsible job on *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. I started to write in that vein, but I quit. What gave out was not my psychological knowledge—granted it is a couple of decades out of date—but rather my belief that Skinner actually had written the kind of book that would repay an innocently serious attempt to consider his arguments and his evidence and to derive some careful, prudent judgments about them. This may have been a wrong-headed decision. Skinner may be right in castigating his humanist critics for ignorance of the latest wrinkles of behaviorist psychology or for failing to realize in their eagerness to defend freedom against tyranny that there are some systems of total control that never generate what he calls "aversive consequences." I may belong in one or both of those unflattering categories. The reader who disagrees with my hard-won sense that this is not a wholly serious book should switch to another reviewer. I suggest Noam Chomsky. That already turned-off reader may choose either the justly famous review of Skinner's more genuinely technical treatise, *Verbal Behavior* (reviewed in 1959), or Chomsky's recent review of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* in the 30 December 1971 *New York Review of Books*. In either case, he will read essentially the same review, even though the reviews are about different books. Chomsky takes Skinner to task with a meticulous accuracy that stands in revealing contrast to Skinner's bluff arrogance. I think he shows that Skinner's approach, either to verbal behavior or to freedom and dignity, suffers from an eccentric notion of what the scientific method is and how one goes about performing an analysis of certain complex types of behavior.

The path I have chosen is to treat *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* as a book written for the psychological lay reader but which, for Skinner, at least, is a thoroughly serious effort. I do maintain that there are some perhaps unintentionally hilarious emphases and conclusions in the book. But that Skinner is serious in wanting to root out certain mistaken habits of thought now regrettably current among men of letters can hardly be doubted.

Yet another equally apt way of characterizing *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* is simply to say, to those who have read Skinner's previous best-seller, *Walden II*, that this latest book is a mildly technical commentary on the basic philosophical underpinning of the Walden II utopian community. The arguments between Frazier, Burris, and Castle, which were narrative modes of describing a concrete utopia are in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* shorn of their literary trimmings and set forth abstractly for their own sake. *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* stands to *Walden II* as Plato's *Republic* would have stood to a tale about Syracuse under Dionysus (if Plato could have whipped that young rascal into shape) or as the story of the Croton community under Pythagoras would have stood to a Pythagorean utopia, had he written one. If I am right in these perceptions, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* really should have come first and *Walden II* afterward. For *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* develops the theoretical framework and argues, like the first book of More's *Utopia*, that contemporary society is warped and corrupt because of basic conceptual misunderstandings and distortions. It would then seem logical that *Walden II* should follow along after *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* to provide us with a concrete literary realization of the new and improved world system available if only the theoretical model were translated into visualized life forms.

I am not sure why Skinner has chosen to provide us first with a utopia and then, more than two decades later, with a rationale for the same utopia. But I would not be much surprised if his purpose were inspired by recent revelations that the tendencies of present global civilization, extrapolated only a couple of decades into the future, are pushing that civilization straight towards the millennium.

The first chapter of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* invokes the familiar images of modern millennialists—the ninety-degree takeoff of the world population curve, the probable prospect of nuclear annihilation, the depletion of irreplaceable resources, and the pollution of the ecosphere by the progress of modern industry. And so he points out very early that

> What we need is a technology of behavior. We could solve our problems quickly enough if we could adjust the growth of the world's population as precisely as we adjust the course of a space ship or improve agriculture and industry with some of the confidence with which we accelerate high energy particles, or move toward a peaceful world with something like the steady progress with which physics has approached absolute zero. . . but a behavioral technology comparable in power and precision

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> to physical and biological technology is lacking, and those who do not find the very possibility ridiculous are more likely to be frightened by it than reassured. That is how far we are from understanding human issues in the sense in which physics and biology understand their fields, and *how far we are from preventing the catastrophe toward which the world seems to be inexorably moving* [emphasis mine]. (p. 5)

The thrust of this and similar emphases in Skinner's book is clear enough and hardly original with Skinner. The evidence marshalled in sermons from the prophets of doom seems to be incontrovertible; we are all but surfeited with jeremiads. The prophets of doom are in considerable danger of having so prodigally expended whatever shock value they may have had at first that nobody is even listening much anymore. But Skinner has been alerted. It must have been the sense of impending tragedy for the race that carried him back to the subject of *Walden II* twenty-three years later. I suspect that much of the dogmatic and declarative quality of Skinner's prose that so annoys Chomsky and which, judging from the sale of this book, must perversely attract many of his less sophisticated readers, derives from the sense of urgency that he feels in the year 1972. The quoted passage also reveals something of the tone of avuncular exasperation at the great humanistic unwashed who, however noble their intentions, are mindlessly coöperating in the "inexorable catastrophe" toward which Skinner sees the whole world heading. Preserve "freedom" and "dignity" as these noble savages adrift in a technological world insist upon it, and there will be no "beyond." Those liberal humanists whose structure of values is rooted in a vanished past are coöperating in the destructive character of physical technology which has given to the population explosion, pollution, the bomb, and resource depletion their terrifying capacity to exterminate the human species in just a few decades. So unless we cynically suppose that Skinner is merely massaging his own ego by producing a shocking best-seller, or is greedy to preserve that juicy grant from the National Institutes of Mental Health, it seems to me that he is taking up the stance of psychological missionary to educated heathen suffering from scientific cultural lag. He must think that only a person of his prestige has a chance of bringing home an understanding of the problem and what he takes to be the available solution. That solution, since it derives from the laboratory, will never be deduced without help by the literary and political types who will not read psychology and if they did would fail to draw the startling conclusions for humanity implicit in bar-presses by rats and peckings by pigeons.

At any rate, building upon these assumptions, and before essaying any attempt to relate what I see in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* any more closely to the actual text, I wish to try out my own précis of the book's message on those cultured barbarians to whom Skinner is trying to bring the good news of behavioral technology.

It goes something like this. The sciences of physics and biology began to clear up the vagueness and the mystery in which the behavior of everyday objects and creatures was enveloped when Plato and Aristotle dominated the pre-scientific scene only when they rid themselves of the notion of *purpose* and restricted themselves to *causes*. Never mind that you may suppose that an explanation of sorts may be given for behavior in terms of needs and wants as well as in terms of "mechanical" pushes and shoves. Even the cultured barbarians have come around to the acceptance of straightforward causal explanation in the case of the neutral objects treated by physicists. More reluctantly, the pre-scientific *polloi* have admitted and accepted the imminent reduction of organic life to physical and chemical processes treated by biologists and biochemists. But what about the behavior of human "objects"? Can they be analyzed in like fashion, their behavior predicted and manipulated, and their groups and their interrelations controlled as readily and as legitimately as a swarm of electrons and protons? Skinner's rough-and-ready answer is a rapid affirmative, and he is supremely confident that the very nature of science itself guarantees the reduction of the human "object" in precisely the same mode that the sciences of matter and life have pioneered. He sets up the opposition to his own scientistic certainties in the form of "defenders of freedom and dignity" who, in their petulant and reactionary opposition, dim the last and the only hope for mankind's survival.

This seems to be the justification for Skinner acting as promoter in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* for a heavy-handed boxing match. In the one corner we have Science—a brawny young heavyweight on whose side is the smart money of the sports-minded minority. In the other corner we have an old fighter, Freedom, a bit wrinkled and leaden-footed, veteran of a good many bouts, and once upon a time a fairly heavy swinger. Skinner clangs the bell and brings both fighters out, but only Science gets in any killing punches—not all of them above the belt. In a bout like this there can be little doubt about the identity of the winner. Apparently the promoter thinks the "autonomous man" should have had the sense to retire from the ring before putting on this pitiful exhibition. For, to change the metaphor, the contest between science and the autonomous man as Skinner masterminds it is like a set-to between one of Socrates' interlocutors and Socrates himself in one of Plato's dialogues. Plato sees to it that the winner is already firmly decided before the dialectical horseplay begins.

But I stray from my précis, and given the weightiness of the matter I suppose I should be a little more serious about it. Even if the battle in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* is what I claim, a mock encounter between a morality-play Science and a Molière-ish Traditional Freedom, why does Skinner bother to put the contestants to each other's throats, and furthermore, how does the picture of Science mauling Traditional Freedom help to save us all from the approaching world disaster?

I think we need to approach the answer roundabout rather than directly. Borrowing a page from William James, the question at issue can be put as follows: Is there a soul in man, and, even if there is, does it make any difference? James asked somewhere whether a "mechanical sweetheart," who behaved in every way like a real sweetheart, would ever betray her one blemish—namely that she had no soul? Skinner's answer is that one could never tell the difference and that the question itself is rather asinine,

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betraying as it does an old-fashioned view of the person. The answer Skinner attributes to the defenders of freedom and dignity is, Yes—glory be—soul makes the difference—practically *all* the difference—between a real, human sweetheart and the most convincing automaton. Now the connotations of "soul" in the example are a little, though not altogether, misleading. The expression "soul" cannot be employed without implying the philosophical and religious meanings with which it is encrusted and which carry considerations of immortality, God, and spiritual values. Well, Skinner does believe that the reverberations of such an expression as "soul" are still confusing the outlook of the modern defenders of freedom and dignity, even though the notion of soul has been fairly thoroughly secularized. The real source of confusion comes from the liberal tradition of natural rights and natural law which identifies the human being—in contrast to the dead things of his non-human environment—as a bearer of rights revealed by reason (and certified upstairs by the Deity). The defender of freedom and dignity primly restricts science and technology to the realm of physical things and insists upon preserving an enclave specifically "human" wherein the old dispensation still lingers. To put it as carelessly as Skinner actually does, one could say that the other side holds that man can mold and remold his environment by the use of the faculty of will which is a force innate to his mind and that where there is injustice, given the right attitude, free men may root it out and triumph over a hostile environment. But given this gross assumption, Skinner would say, the illusion is created that, regardless of the pushes and pulls of the environment and regardless of the Old Adam in the form of genetic inheritance, the free will of man can now and then supervene over the physical world and print his own mark upon it. Man is not a slave, says Freedom, he is an architect, a mover and a shaker. Matter, Freedom admits, makes for a tough road, but, with the help of Reason and an attitude of inner courage, man's will can triumph over outer adversity and material evil and exhibit the Promethean dignity of the human spirit. Toward this stance, Skinner is both contemptuous and compassionate. His ambivalence may be summed up in the old saw "Forgive them Lord for they know not what they do." Skinner agrees that the nub of the problem is the ignorance of his soul-intoxicated opponents, but he is not about to "forgive" them while there remains the faintest hope of pumping in enough information about behavioral technology to sober them up.

There is yet another way of viewing the dream that Skinner dreams in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. It is the ancient dream of materially sophisticating a hunk of matter until it springs into life. In the Gilgamesh epic, Aruru did it by cleverly mixing some water and clay until man emerged from the goo. Genesis tells us that the "Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." The Hebraic account already contains the conviction that the human being is dually constituted, an amalgam of mind and body, matter miraculously animated, and not merely a mechanical sweetheart. It is not far from Genesis to Pope's picture of man ambivalently placed somewhere between God and the rest of creation, doubting whether he is the more god-like or the more bestial. But whether we attribute the urge to original sin or derive it from man's natural cleverness, man has always had a yen to displace the Deity and play creator himself. Pygmalion desperately wanted his beautiful handiwork to come to life and—wanting it badly enough—she (it?) did. Dr. Frankenstein accomplished something similar even though the results of his laboratory work lacked the artistic quality of Pygmalion's animated stonework. Skinner's dream is not unrelated to all those that preceded his. Admittedly Skinner is modest enough not to see himself as the actual architect who materially sophisticates matter until it springs into life and begins to feel, discourse, and act. He gives to Evolution the "creative" urge and contents himself with the role of press-agent for untutored Nature's ability to bring forth without effort what to soul-clouded eyes seems a miracle. Something like this lies behind Skinner's irritation with mystification, naiveté, faith, soul, "humanism" and its mythical trappings. They are all unconsciously intended to puff up a machine by installing a falsely potent ghost in its innards. "Mind steals the show." (p. 12) Yesterday all this story-telling was a harmless, even sometimes a useful, self-delusion. Today this romantic optimism, plus a half-way science and technology, means practical ineffectuality in an unforgiving environment. If we do not overcome our reluctance to seize and manipulate the real control-levers that lie available in life's environment we will soon be done for. It is because romantic optimism is so deadly dangerous in this world that Skinner intends his book to detoxify those—the majority apparently—who are still drunk with anthropomorphic fantasy about the human machine.

Skinner, I believe, isolates the real threat in the mistaken notion of cause that clings to the "autonomous inner man" vaguely designated by "soul" or "mind." What is a cause? For Skinner, a cause is a *force* that produces a *change*, an effect. Again, a borrowed, non-Skinnerian example will suffice. A cue-ball strikes a stationary billiard-ball and the struck ball moves toward the pocket. The cue-ball's motion is the cause and the billiard-ball's observed motion is the effect. At the moment, the complications of the example are not particularly important, but they will be later. What causes the cause? Answer: A previous motion. Question: Can the effect also be a cause? Answer: Yes. While heading toward the pocket, the billiard-ball may strike another ball and cause it to move, and so on. It is true that this example is sorely defective if one has in mind the actual predictive formulae of modern science, including modern behavioral science. The fact is that the language of cause and effect is part of a vocabulary that, while it serves well enough in the crude early stages of scientific inquiry, tends to become unnecessary and even irrelevant as the science becomes more sophisticated. Who can distinguish cause from effect in Einstein's formula for the space-time constant? And what purpose would it serve to try to do so? None. Skinner seems to be quite aware of this (*e.g.*, p. 7) and is hugely confident that he could argue his position in terms of the defined constructs that occur in a statement of a complex

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schedule of variable reinforcements of behavior, but the fact is that throughout his book he relies upon a simple, non-dynamic reading of the cause-effect relation that accounts for a good deal of the hearty simplicity that makes his argument carry whatever plausibility it does.

For the heart of Skinner's attempt to wipe out freedom and dignity comes in his frequent declaration that the contents of the human mind are the *effects*, never, never the *causes* of any modification of behavior. I repeat. Skinner declares that the human mind is a passive recipient of material causes. Let me elaborate by another example.

I want to write a review of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, but being dilatory by nature and distracted by a thousand other things, I don't manage to get to the typewriter soon enough to prevent feeling a certain uneasiness, then a real worry. Finally, enough upset by the embarrassing and very real possibility that the deadline will actually arrive and that I must face my editor empty-handed as well as empty-headed, I begin to push down the keys driven by a sense of duty, spiced with proleptic guilt, and I work fitfully, harried by a combination of a forgiving and understanding ego and a sarcastic Simon Legree of a superego. The language of my description, although not foreign to any reluctant writers among my readers, is, technically, just backwards for Skinner. I say that my "wanting" to write moves me sluggishly to act and behave, and I say that my fears, guilts, and potential embarrassments interact with other half-conscious and half-understood mental determinants to overcome the reluctance I feel and, finally, to produce some visible marks on the blank paper in front of me—which reduces my anxiety. No. All wrong. While I cannot recap what I just offered in "explanation" of my hesitant writing of this review in purely behavioral terms, neither can Skinner. His claim is that, in principle, the affective language used above contains an implicit claim that intentions, feelings, wills, fears, senses of duty, and the like *produce* ("cause") the "outer man's" behavior. And the sequence is always translatable into what I shall call *behaviorese*. "Behaviorese"—a term I just invented—simply marks out a language which contains no place for any non-observable mental words—words like "intention," "purpose," "desire," and the like. Skinnerism is the thesis that all the causes, all the "real" causes, occur (or someday soon will occur) in behaviorese. But there is a certain class of effects—the contents of mind—that never get expressed in behaviorese. The implication is that nothing fully real is missed by confining oneself to behaviorese. Put it another way. One can say in behaviorese *everything* that the old tradition thought it was saying.

If this is not wholly clear to the reader, it is because it is not clear to this writer—and I contend it is not even clear to Skinner himself. To put it in terms of my earlier talk about the interaction of billiard-balls, what this view denies is that when we talk about behavior some "billiard-balls" can produce motion but others are sterile. While mind and matter are not fully comparable to a field of billiard-balls, the fact of interaction in both cases seems evident enough. If there is such a thing as a mind (which Skinner does not clearly deny) and it does have feelings, perceptions, and thoughts, why should behavioral science not be open to the possibility of causal interplay? How, given the relatively undeveloped state of behavioral psychology, can one be sure that none of its future laws will require a mental variable? Toward this, Skinner's stance seems to be that behaviorese will suffice to describe the whole person because it *must*. Otherwise, psychology would not be precisely like physics and chemistry, and otherwise Skinner's laboratory wisdom would not, in principle, be extendable to the whole human interaction with the environment. Let it be granted that this would be unhandy and messy for someone whose faith rests on the adequacy of behaviorese. But this is by no means the same thing as establishing behaviorese as the sole adequate language of psychology. Skinner makes the astounding claim that he could write his whole book in behaviorese (pp. 23-24) but he never tries even a paragraph or two as a demonstration. I conclude that the claim is empty posturing.

I am willing to try the patience of my readers with another metaphor. Mind, for Skinner, is a motorless dinghy being towed by a powerful ocean-liner. In order to trace the course of the dinghy, one can ignore what the crew has charted for its course; they have no choice but to be carried along wherever the captain on the bridge of the ocean-liner wants to go. No matter how loudly the crew in the dinghy shouts, the captain never hears them and never alters his course. (The analogy is terribly defective. For one thing, though there are powerful diesels propelling the liner, there is no captain on the bridge—the course of both vessels is simply the resultant of the liner's responses to the wind and the water together with the characteristics engineered into the vessel.)

So Skinner claims to know that what actually went on while I fidgeted about this review can be explained without any residue attributable to some "inner" causation. "I," says Skinner, refers to a certain focus of matter that is the resultant of a lengthy causal chain of behavioral modifications that now emerge as dispositions to behave out of a particular repertoire of ways triggered by outside stimuli. "I" is a name, simply, for the current residue of the immensely complex existence-struggles of my earliest ancestors (a puddle of potent amino acids cauterized by a few flashes of lightning) down and around and through the adventures of the germ plasm until the result emerges as what I represent to be "me." But "I" isn't something I did or anything that, by taking thought or screwing up my courage, "I" helped to develop or that "I" could conceivably modify now. In this respect, though not in all others, "I" am on the same footing as the desk chair I now sit upon. There is no mystery here. While there is more complexity and a far larger behavioral repertoire associated with "me" than with the desk-chair, I should resist my superstitious feeling that the congeries of particles that constitute me are subtly inhabited by some active being that "steals the show" from the real causes, those operative during the whole course of evolution that has happened to slow to a temporary pause in this vibrating clump of molecules. The foregoing is only a part, though the biggest part, of the Skinnerian reduction and reversal of the situation. The

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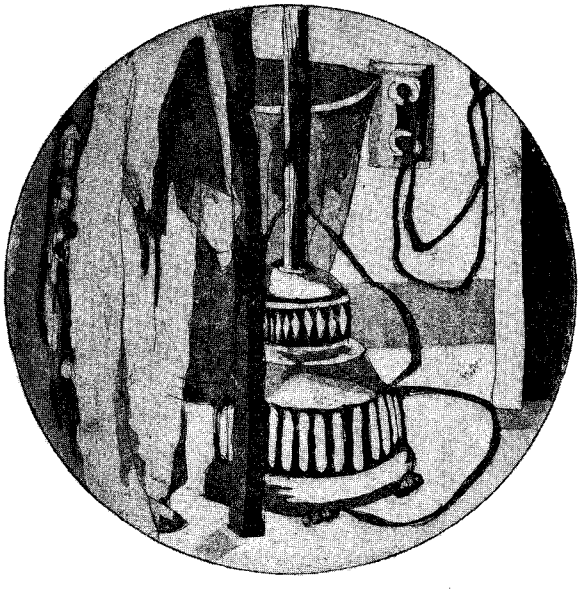
complement to this set of causes is the schedule of positive and negative reinforcements constituting my life-history up to this moment as, at long last, I am actually manipulating typewriter keys.

Put the two together—genetic endowment and reinforcement history—and a complete explanation of my behavior is available, in principle.

But it won't wash. Skinner's notion of a scientific psychology is, as we have said, something not argued but declared. If one tries to reconstruct what the argument must be, its crude assumptions come out clear and strong. And the joker in the deck is the hoary notion of "cause." The kind of causal relation upon which Skinner founds his entire critique of mentalism is itself prescientific in the following manner. It supposes that science is "materialistic" in a sense that excludes experience and the subject of experience, the self. Since I would assume that Skinner would admit, and even insist, that science is founded upon experience as its source of data, how we can at the same time exclude from its data the very experience on which it is founded is never explained. Whatever may be the strategic successes won by the so-called hard sciences in the purifying of their objects of study from projected purposes and intentions, the same strategy cannot be simply transferred by fiat to the science of behavior, for here, to put it paradoxically, the experiencing self studies and relates portions of experience to other portions of its own experience, part of which naturally is the experience of the behavior of others. Behaviorese insists that only matter can interact with matter to produce a change. But this crude prejudice has long since been shown groundless. David Hume demonstrated in the eighteenth century the emptiness of the rationalist assumption of the assumed "necessary connection" between a cause and its effect, or at least showed that this dogma had no experiential basis.



All that "cause" can mean, experientially, if Hume is right, is covered by statistical probability and involves no mysterious "power" in the cause necessarily to create the effect. If Skinner believes science is experiential, then, and if the connections of observed variables in psychology involve experienced and (inferentially) observed relations between intentions and behavior, between purposes and behavior, between feelings and behavior, then there is no good scientific reason for denying that such relationships cannot somehow enter into the laws of psychology. If this is so, then the "inner man" is not wholly autonomous, but neither is he necessarily merely the impotent receiver of material and behavioral causes. The evidence seems to suggest that man is a psychophysical complex, with his behavior and his conscious experience dynamically related and complexly interacting both within and without the person. Genesis is not as out-dated as Skinnerians may imagine.

The truth seems to be that science itself—as science—takes no position on the "reality of matter" or the "reality of mind." Science contents itself with what can be observed, with what can be worked out mathematically to function in a predictive law, and it does not methodologically exclude a class of observable or experienceable variables on the grounds that they cannot be expressed in a language that calls upon no vocabulary except that of physics-chemistry. There is an opposite danger of allowing psychology to get defined as "the science of consciousness," illegitimately excluding the behavioral variables and their influence upon consciousness and its contents. The "correction" of that error is not to deny the legitimacy of intention, purpose, and feeling as candidates for scientific explanation, but to encounter the phenomenon of the person in his experienced wholeness and to pursue the task of explanation of the entire complex person's experience as well as his behavior. But not excluding his experience.

One of the ways that Skinner proposes to demonstrate the reduction of the mental to the material in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* is the citing of statements that include apparent mentalistic components and then translating them into behaviorese. These attempts are apparently serious and at the same time quite amusing. The reader who has an appetite for examples of these embarrassing demonstrations of Skinner's inability to make behaviorese say what the original statement says is referred to Chomsky's two reviews of Skinner earlier mentioned.

Though Skinner does not identify his own work as prophetic, it implies prophecy. A Superpsychologist of, maybe, a century from now could consult his book of formulae, get a reading on my genetic materials, accumulate the relevant variables in the history of the reinforcements contributed to that genetic material by its environment up to the depression of these typewriter keys, and then code the composite data into a decent computer array and wait a few seconds for this review to be printed out. And if you and I could clamp on the electrodes right now and climb into a forward-geared time machine and search the data that the Superpsychologist had read into the tapes that fed the computer, we would discover not a single

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instance of a variable that could be read out as "worry," "guilt," "inner needs" or anything of the sort. Indeed, there would be no category of variables in the data that corresponds to the "I" to which I have been earlier attributing such purposes, frustrations, and fears. The behavior in question would have been "explained" in every and any legitimate sense of that word and it would not have been necessary to encode anything beyond behaviorese. Again we have touched in this example on the essence of Skinnerism, although he would have to regard me as a bad expositor since I read science fiction where he records scientific "fact."

Only one thing remains, and that is to generalize the result of the small excursion into science fiction in which I have indulged. In every case where a change in behavior is attributed to some mental cause, the real causes will turn out to be behavioral (stateable, that is, in behaviorese) and in no conceiveable case, past or future, will it be necessary to code into the computer any of the classes of alleged variables under the pseudo-rubric of "the mind" in order to summon up a truly LaPlacean power to map the course of human behavior from the crack of dawn to the knell of doom.

While my examples and efforts at analogies have stressed the shape of the coming science of behavior as sketched by Skinner, Skinner himself—while implying that the theory has a shape something like that I have given it—is more interested in practice than in theory. Skinner is less interested in the pure scientist's dream of a completed theoretical account of behavior in neat behaviorese than he is in behavior modification. More bluntly he is—at least in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*—far more centered on the control of behavior than he is in the dream of complete elaboration of theory that can be fantasied by spreading out the glory-road future of behavioresed psychology.

So, for the purposes of understanding what *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* is driving at, we can be content with a simple sketch of operant conditioning. An "operant" is merely a piece of behavior which appears without any obvious stimulus having produced it. Operants are reinforced by some events and not by others. The objects associated with the reinforcing event are "reinforcers" and reinforcers can become associated with objects of secondary significance which then select the original responses. (That is, in non-behavorese, I want food but I need money to get it and so I want money.) The strength of an operant can be measured by the rate of the response during withdrawal of reinforcement. The eventual result is the extinction of the response. (That is, again in non-behaviorese, I come to a utopia where there is abundant food and no money, but my previous greedy habits hang on and I continue to squirrel away money and other valuables, until, one fine day, I simply cease to want money.) Skinner's experiments with rats in a box with a bar to press and his experiments with pecking behavior of pigeons seem to indicate that in a relatively short time, with attention to intermittent reinforcement according to careful scheduling, the behavior of these animals can be molded in a remarkable variety of ways under the experimenter's control. (Those readers who may find this skimpy summary of operant conditioning too sparse and want to know more are referred to Skinner himself in *Verbal Behavior, The Behavior of Organisms,* and *Schedules of Reinforcement,* or unless powerfully conditioned to be reinforced by dense reading matter, they may find it possible to content themselves with Chomsky's definitive review of *Verbal Behavior in Language,* 35, 1959, available in a Bobbs-Merrill reprint, No. A-34.)

A rather surprising fact is that the present review contains more detail about operants than does *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. While Skinner directs the reader to plenty of references to his own works in the back of the book, the text is not cluttered up with detail about operant conditioning. Instead he merely warns the reader that he will discuss the issues from a scientific point of view but adds that "this does not mean that the reader will need to know the details of the scientific analysis of behavior. A mere interpretation will suffice." (p. 22) Skinner must have had in mind the character of his intended audience as well as the urgency of the world crisis. So he limits himself to cryptic declarations, never condescending to argue for those declarations or even to provide a summary of the evidence that might support them. I suspect that his decision also relieves him of some embarrassing discontinuities between assertion and evidence. But perhaps we have already lingered too long on theory. Skinner leaps avidly toward the large implications he sees for the global concerns of human beings slumbering in their dogmatic humanism while in the midst of a threatened civilization. We shall now, having given a more than decent introduction, follow him in his extrapolation from rats and pigeons to the peculiar habits of the human organism.

Adopting the heuristic assumption that the "autonomous inner man" has been expelled, the practical question becomes one of the arrangement of the contingencies of reinforcement that will assure survival. But this seems, at first blush, to involve a question of values. If the autonomous inner man is not available as the initiator of values, where do they come from? Skinner's answer bowls us over with its devastating simplicity. Good is merely positive reinforcement; bad is negative reinforcement. And the science of operant conditioning doubles in brass as the science of human values. This comes close to saying that good is pleasure and bad is pain. This amounts to classical hedonism and it will be convenient to speak as if he were a hedonist. The trouble with such a label, for Skinner, is not that it is substantively incorrect as a value system, but that it implies that the heart of the matter lies in certain qualities of *feeling*—and feeling, we are repetitively told, is only a "by-product." Thus the vital question is not the description of feelings—of any sort—but the production of techniques for controlling and changing behavior. Get the behavior changed and the feelings will track behind like the dinghy being towed by the ocean-liner. If someone positively reinforced feels pleased, it seems apparent to Skinner that to concentrate on the pleasure is to lose ourselves in prescientific irrelevance. Though I cannot recall a mention of Marx's name in the text of *Beyond Freedom and*

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Dignity (incidentally, there is no index), the impatience Skinner feels with the traditional focus of ethical discussion is an impatience similar to that which Marx felt when confronted with Feuerbach's abstract humanism: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it." To tell someone to love his neighbor is just plain irresponsible, Skinner holds. For if you want to produce behavior in someone that reinforces certain tendencies of another person, you must set about to control the contingencies of reinforcement so that the behavior is likely to occur. But to harangue the man about love, as if that mind stuffed with "by-products" could get off its duff and begin to practice love in a world where reinforcement of the opposite tendencies is common, is ignorant, even if well-intentioned, hot air. After this, the rest can be inferred easily enough. Here is a sample: ". . . The issue of fairness or justice is often simply a matter of good husbandry. The question is whether reinforcers are being used wisely." (p. 112) This tells us little about justice since the definition contains ethically-flavored terms that are undefined, like "wise" and "good." If we ask about the meanings of these terms, I gather we will be told more about arranging contingencies of reinforcements but little about how to recognize which ones are "wise" or "good." Or, as a sample of the translation of an ethical precept into behaviorese, consider the following: "You should tell the truth" is said to be the equivalent of "If you are reinforced by the approval of your fellow men, you will be reinforced when you tell the truth." (p. 112) While the translation is not even close to good behaviorese, neither does it come close to capturing the meaning of the statement it presumes to translate—which at the very least implies that one ought to tell the truth regardless of whether he is positively reinforced or negatively reinforced. A duty to tell the truth is said by some moralists to get its special character precisely from its independence of all reinforcing tendencies of the environment. Skinner could say that such a statement is meaningless and thus would not appear in behaviorese; but purporting to translate it with an equivalent in terms of contingencies of reinforcement flatly fails. In the chapter on values, and for that matter throughout the book, Skinner retains his privilege of talking about the self and its feelings as if they were really relevant to the description. But apparently he does so with the tacit reservation that it could all be translated into the real stuff of behaviorese if only his audience were not so conditioned to a misleading mentalistic vocabulary. But these niceties are for Skinner's main thrust somewhat beside the point. His worries about survival in the face of our destruction of the conditions that could permit survival are dominant in the chapter on values as they are elsewhere. And so he insists on seeing the problem as one of arranging an environment wherein the personal reinforcers are linked by effective conditioning with the non-personally reinforcing circumstances that will make for future survival of the species, even though the individual is doomed to die.

If all this sounds a bit clumsy, I must wearily agree. By promoting a bastardized behaviorese, Skinner has, to my mind, not clarified the problem of survival but befogged it. If one puts aside the attempt to frame things in the Skinnerian nomenclature, it is much easier to speak, but you must bear in mind that Skinner regards it as egregiously incorrect. If personal good is pleasure and personal evil is pain, and if self-sacrifice is required in order to serve the good of the group, how can the individual be persuaded to do what must be done to serve the social good? Freedom is the bug-bear, since to the prescientific savage it suggests that controls—of any sort—are bad things. But, if one's hangups about freedom are cured by the stiff dose of behaviorese earlier prescribed, then the answer clearly emerges. One simply finds a way to control the environment—the contingencies of reinforcement—in such a way that the controlled persons behave, without a visible lash or prod, to find personally reinforcing precisely the behavior which is necessary for social survival. It is an article of Skinnerian faith that such control can be exercised "without deferred aversive consequences." Again, if one may be allowed to desert behaviorese, it's not all that hard to say it. Benevolent despotism is better than egoistic freedom in the long run, even though it doesn't appeal to pleasure-seekers in the short run. Trying to condition readers to favor a world better in the long run is what the rest of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* is about.

For one thing, what one is sorely tempted to call Skinner's "brave new world" will be a world without punishment—as ordinarily conceived. The key point is once again the forced abdication of the "responsible" inner man. If it is the environment that is "responsible" (Skinner has no qualms about anthropomorphizing the environment—claiming that it gets the "credit" and the "blame"), the punishment of individuals, assuming falsely that they could have willed something other than to act as they did, is insanity. Nor is it of any real use to pussyfoot around with tender-minded therapy or pedagogical persuasion of the usual sort in order to induce behavioral change without imposing strong control. These weak measures of control, while they rationalize the queasiness of the defender of freedom overtly to control another, merely shift the actual control elsewhere. We see Skinner setting aside the retributive model of punishment that goes along with classical freewill, and adopting the utilitarian mode of punishment that goes along with classical determinism. The question whether someone deserves punishment is not really a question of "desert," but merely a question of the probable future results of countercontrol exercised because of a failure of the environmental controls in the first place. In a prudently organized world the environmental controls will operate effectively enough to make aversive countercontrol in the form of punishment quite unnecessary.

The rest of the book is concerned with the elaboration, very little new being brought forward, of the problem posed in early chapters—survival. And the Skinnerian prescription, based on behaviorese, amounts to nothing more but nothing less than the recognition of the desperate need for making Skinnerian philosopher-kings out of the holders of power in the society. All the other Skinnerian assumptions must be assumed to be enforced—the autonomous inner man displaced, the urge to ask *who* will actually exercise

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power and any doubts about his moral capacity dispelled, the reality of the crisis of civilization admitted, and the adequacy of the behavioral technology right now at our disposal recognized. Then, on some fateful day, we trade off the myth of freedom and dignity for the promise of survival of our civilization, even though we will not live to enjoy the allegedly "non-aversive" long-term consequences of the prudently arranged contingencies of reinforcement.

Perhaps the largest question that Skinner sees is the question he repeatedly returns to in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, the question of how to get people reinforced by the unselfish requirements of species survival. We're producing too many children because we're strongly reinforced sexually. Why should any individual reduce his gratification because of the population threat? There is no "good reason," of course, in the Skinnerian system; there is only the application of what an earlier tradition called sanctions. More bluntly, a way must be found gently to force individuals by reinforcement to do what they would otherwise rather not do. The same goes for all the other reinforcing things that individuals selfishly permit themselves —industrial profits that wreck the very conditions for survival, but which are strongly reinforcing for individuals and for groups in the short run. Another way of presenting the same problem is the expression used by Richard Falk in *This Endangered Planet*. He calls it the paradox of aggregation. The depletion of resources, for example, through the uninhibited pursuit of individual (and national) aggrandizement is something that will eventually harm—or outright destroy—all of the commercial pirates who plunder the ecosphere. But individual restraint is, from the individual standpoint, absurd. Unless there is universal restraint in conservation, the individual who reduces his own greedy spending of irreplaceable natural resources simply opens the way for an increased exploitation by those less finicky than he. Skinner's solution for the paradox of aggregation is that we must begin to control by adequate positive sanctions what we can never hope to control by weak positive measures or even by the most brutal negative measures of punishment.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Skinner, whatever you and I may think about the quality of his arguments, has highlighted a desperate and pressing human problem. But will men "freely" take the measures necessary to save themselves and their threatened civilization from Judgment? I greatly doubt it. Not because of having read Skinner's book, but because of the books of Ehrlich, Commoner, and Falk that he and I both seem to have read. The outcome hangs on tortuous "ifs." If men are as foolishly greedy as I suspect—if the biosphere is as fragile as I am told —if the ruination of the ecosphere is as far advanced as those who should know claim—then man's earthly nest is his coffin. Skinner's utopia offers a way out of the doom.

Would you prefer to be controlled by benevolent Controllers manipulating people like trained pigeons in order to preserve the civilized world for a while longer, or would you prefer to take your chances with freedom and dignity?

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As I put the question, it is so weaselly that it probably fails to pose sensible alternatives. The civilization that could be preserved through Skinnerian controls will not be the present one. Precisely the elements that I most value must be destroyed in order to assure its survival. Thus, supposing the adequacy of the controls, they will fail to preserve what I take to be the distinctive values of human civilization. The ironic parallel with the explanation offered, apparently in innocent good faith, by the lieutenant who ordered the leveling of the village of Ben Tre is quite perfect. The village, he said, "had to be destroyed in order to save it." But I doubt that Skinner would be disturbed by the parallel. He seems to regard the question of a present person's willingness to live in a controlled society as irrelevant, perhaps meaningless. Conditioned by my past, my mind muddled by the myth of freedom and dignity, I will indeed report that I do not "like" the prospect of a controlled society. Skinner would say that the real question is whether the people who actually live in that future society would "like" it. And, supposing it could all be brought off as Skinner envisages it, the answer will be that this "liking" is part of the program of the Controllers who arrange the contingencies of reinforcement in a way guaranteed to result in feelings of satisfaction in the minds of the citizens. The situation is illustrated by the horror of the Savage in Huxley's *Brave New World* at the habits of the soma-happy society to which he was abruptly transported by the Alpha-Plus, Bernard. Had the Savage been decanted instead of born, and properly conditioned by hypnopedia like the others, he would have found himself both controlled and satisfied.

Shortly after Eve accepted the apple and offered it to Adam, their descendants began to work industriously to subdue the earth and to build in it a substitute for the paradise lost. And now the substitute seems to be failing us. Does Skinner offer an apple without a worm? Is he a Serpent or a True Prophet? —*Thomas H. Thompson*

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The Book Of Nightmares, by Galway Kinnell. Houghton Mifflin. $4.50

Walking outside in Wisconsin during a rare January thaw with *The Book of Nightmares* in your pocket you start to see things differently. You get that sense of cleansed vision Blake talked about: each tree and bird seems scissored out of the air and yet a part of some hidden wholeness. So the recognition comes again: poems *do* enter life, not just as memorable language but as vision, too.

Then inside, later, when the thaw is over and night and the factory smoke start coming down like a lid on the house, you look up from *The Book of Nightmares* and realize why Kinnell is being considered an "ecological" poet lately. Living things in his poems are always that precisely because their *relation* with their environments is so alive:

> The witness trees heal
> their scars at the flesh fire,
> the flame
> rises off the bones,
> the hunger
> to be new lifts off
> my soul, an eerie blue light blooms
> on all the ridges of the world. . .
> ("The Path Among the Stones")

Like Snyder and Wright, he's trying to achieve that communion with the world man never made which belonged to the Transcendentalists.

> the oath sworn between earth and water,
> flesh and spirit, broken,
> to be sworn again,
> over and over, in the clouds, and to be
> broken again,
> over and over, on earth.
> ("Under the Maud Moon")

And, as that quotation shows, Kinnell is in that fine old American tradition in which matter is so impregnated with spirit that it moves, communicates and communes in self-regenerating cycles. It even has volition and will when his speaker grants it.

> I can see
> the dead, crossed limbs
> longing again for the universe, I can
> hear
> in the wet wood the snap
> and re-snap of the same embrace being
> torn.

* * *

The Book of Nightmares contains a number of those impressive poems we've seen in magazines in the last few years and heard Kinnell read aloud (he has to be the best reader in America, doesn't he?): "The Shoes of Wandering," "The Hen Flower," "The Dead Shall Be Raised Incorruptible." But it is more than a collection; it's one long poem which is a kind of journey *in* America, not across it. There are no vistas and horizons: the panoramas are vertical rather than horizontal as the speaker exorcises nothingness and exercises his spirit in fragments of the natural world which move him into an immanently "higher" one.

A Whitmanesque self-styled wanderer, the speaker follows the fragmented map of our post-*Wasteland* mariners:

> I long for the mantle
> of the great wanderers, who lighted
> their steps by the lamp
> of pure hunger and pure thirst . . .

And yet there is no major crisis of confidence here. By constantly going out into other people, other things, the speaker renews himself continuously. Sometimes there is a terrible strain in that transaction and the movement to a cosmic dimension from an individual one seems forced, even pretentious. But it's to be expected: *The Book of Nightmares* picks up the central problem of our poetry now—one which will increasingly trouble us as we try to move away from the discrete, New Critical work and the isolated self: by placing the perceiving self at the center of the poem's consciousness and granting the existence of other means of perception only through that self, any escape from Self is difficult, tendentious, improbable. For example, the speaker says of the spirit of the hen:

> And then the wait—
> not long, I grant, but all my life—
> for the small, soft
> thud of her return among the stones.
> Can it ever be true—
> all bodies, one body, one light
> made of everyone's darkness together?

Then, several stanzas later, the poem finishes with: "Never mind./ The self is the last of it./ Let our scars fall in love."/ The "Big Statement" is part of that Whitman tradition, but Whitman—and certainly it's beyond the aberrations of his sexuality—does have fellowship with his "brothers" out there; Kinnell approaches them always through the physical object which is a talisman (shoes, tv set, camp fire, letters, fortune teller's ball) for the spiritual. The terms of this communion, then, remain in the self even as speaker and reader attempt to transcend it.

* * *

A *book* of nightmares. Not just a collection of pre-digested experiences, but each poem a record of the nightmare in present tense. The poem itself is a road, Kinnell tells us over and over, and the subordinate themes of the wanderer—birth and beginnings, phsyical vs. spiritual reality, the search for a direction, the various experiences of death-in-life and death—make the poem "about itself" by being incorporated in the poem's conduct: its discontinuous making-of-itself as it proceeds. The eternal return of the poem on itself in the tradition of *Paterson* carries the terms of paradox in Kinnell, too. There is a "life force" here which is God-given—and another, a force of death; these operate independently of man. But otherwise, our experience is continuous because things undergo a rebirth and renewal in our perceptions of them. Thus experience is double-edged: every birth is a kind of death, every entrance a departure. The poem as road, the poetry book *of* something, is a form of knowledge itself, both a process and a product.

Then there is the "intellectual structure" of *The Book of Nightmares.* It is ten poems with separate names, each of which is divided into seven parts. Parallels seem possible with a truncated zodiac since the form of a circle and the journey of energy from a primordial state—from potentiality to the virtual, from matter to spirit, from the non-formal to the world of forms—concern both. Or Kinnell's book plays on the *Kabbala;* the ten

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books may relate to the ten sephiroths or divine emanations from God which justify his existence in the universe. The *Kabbala* posits an original soul which was once both male and female, too. Of course, this is in Plato as well. Kinnell may be using both or none to do what is his so that we don't read in Eliotic symbolism, we find significances immanently. Here is some *Kabbala*, or Plato, or just sex.

> She who lies halved
> beside me—she and I once
> watched the bees, dreamers not yet
> dipped into the acids
> of the craving for anything, not yet
> burned down into flies, sucking
> the blossom-dust
> from the pear-tree in spring.
> ("The Call Across the Valley of Not-Knowing")

* * *

Still living with *The Book of Night-Mares*, you take it with you to the university library. This is no place to read it despite students coiled around each other on the couches. But looked at from inside, it seems more and more a rebuttal to *The Wasteland* even as that poem doesn't need one anymore. Kinnell uses landscapes of desolation which seem to parody Eliot's: a fortune teller, the zodiac vegetation rites, a "river of the world." He may even be toying with the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* in making language thaumaturgic—not for the dead, however, but for the living. And like that book, Kinnell uses pictures (placed at the beginning of each poem) as a part of his ritual; whole passages in each poem seem spells, prayers, hymns.

Not all parts of a poem like this one can be "poetry" as Coleridge defined it; there has to be the "poem" aspect too. There are sections in *The Book of Nightmares* where language flattens, where it may seem flaccid. Yet there are other moments where the language almost walks off the page, it has so much self-sustained rhythm. This book risks the problems inherent in its construction and on the whole overcomes them; it's one of the most moving, sustained poems I've read in ages.

But don't read it in the library. Get outdoors somewhere with your copy of Kinnell. See if *The Book of Nightmares* doesn't demand reading aloud, performance. None of us can read as well as Kinnell himself but we can all have our private poetry ceremonies with this book. If you'll invite me to yours, I'll let you in on mine—sometime. *—Peter Cooley*

The Testing-Tree, by Stanley Kunitz. Little, Brown. $4.95

The last shall be first, the Good Book tells us. With the "Confessional Poets" this axiom might be so. Stanley Kunitz was very late in joining the movement toward confessional poetry. *The Testing-Tree*, his confessional testament, was not published until twelve years after Robert Lowell's *Life Studies*, that seminal book which began the movement toward more personal poetry in 1959. Yet in time Kunitz's volume may be seen as one of the most accomplished and enduring of the dozens which have followed Lowell's example.

Although he had never before gone the final measure, Kunitz has always been favorably disposed toward highly personal poetry; yet even his most personal work of the earlier books erected such barriers of rhetoric one was uncertain what the poet meant or, more frequently, what his attitude toward his subject was. Fiercely concentrated, academic with a vengeance, his previous poems for many readers were obscured by thickets of language. In content many seemed Apollonian responses to outside events, attempts to recapture those events or the moods precipitated by them, and only occasionally to record the inner repercussions they triggered. "I suffer the twentieth century," Kunitz wrote in one poem, but his work seemed more a catalog of the century's ills than his innermost reponse to them. About his own sufferings Kunitz often was curiously reticent. In 1964 he addressed himself to these lapses in the remark, "With an intimate poem so much of the power is stored in the silences—those spacings between words and lines and thoughts—where the secret battle is being fought."

Perhaps. This remark would rather seem an evasion, and indicate an unwillingness on the part of the poet to take risks. But if clotted language and overly rational containment did indeed minimize Kunitz's earlier achievement, his grappling with literary influences may be seen as a third deficiency. Surely he had a style of his own; the *Selected Poems* shows him to be a craftsman of sophisticated couplets and metaphysical wit, possessed of a modern style sired by Blake and Marvell. Yet his language at times was Eliot-ridden, too, and the visions of violence and man's inhumanity to man might also reveal an early affinity for Robinson Jeffers.

Other themes prominent in Kunitz's *Selected Poems* were war, racism, the failure of human communication, and the collapse of love. But most significantly, the volume was father-ridden. It is these early father-son poems which point the way toward Kunitz's mature expression, *The Testing-Tree*. In one early poem, "Night Letter," the poet pleads for pardon while "clutching the fragile sleeve/Of my poor father's ghost returned to howl/his wrongs. . ." This Hamlet-like father figure haunts many other early poems as well, most particularly the pair "For the Word Is Flesh" and "Father and Son." Of the latter, he wrote: ". . .all the essential details of the poem are true, as true as dreams are, with characteristic fusions, substitutions, and dislocations. The sister who died and the big house on the hill were not invented for the occasion; they belong to that part of my life which I keep trying to rework into legend."

As true as dreams are is a phrase which characterizes the difference between these early Kunitz familial poems and those of the new volume. In his later work, the poet forsakes the evasions and fictions of the dream and mythological worlds, and crosses the threshold to confront terrible reality bare. The titles of Kunitz's individual collections are in themselves indicative of this shift in sensibility. The first two, *Intellectual Things* and *Passport to the War*, celebrated the cerebral and the public; *The Testing-Tree* celebrates the self. For it is the boy-self of Kunitz which is tested on the target-oak of the title. In a Note to the poem, Kunitz confides, "The stone-

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throwing that figures in the poem was of a somewhat special order, since it did more than try my skill: it challenged destiny. My life hinged on the three throws permitted me, according to my rules. . ."

With *The Testing-Tree* Stanley Kunitz abandons gnarled obscurities and lofty allusions in favor of simple, direct, trustful confessional statements. And he amply demonstrates that he can reach the pitch and take the differentiating risks which other critics have found lacking in his earlier verse. After three books, he was ready to cross the terrible threshold to which he had before only made allusion.

Lines from the book's first poem could serve as an epigraph to the entire collection: "Be what you are. Give/What is yours to give./Have style. Dare." In *The Testing-Tree* Kunitz dares not only to be what he is, but does not shrink from confessing how he got that way. There are, to be sure, a number of occasional poems as before; the book uses as a launching pad for poetic rumination such events as the flight of Apollo, the city police, the plot against Hitler, the Bolshevik Revolution.

The several poems on the break-up of his marriage alone would distinguish Kunitz as a confessional poet. But the book achieves its major thrust and central theme from Kunitz's finally achieving a proper emotional response to and distance from his father's suicide. Coming to terms with this tragedy was a long time in coming, as we have seen. Early in this fourth book we are given a vignette of the poet as a young boy, picking the lock of a trunk to examine vestiges of his dead father's existence: a red Masonic hat and walking stick.

Two short poems continue the exploration of the fatherless son theme. "The Game" shows Kunitz directly addressing the dead father again. "An Old Cracked Tune" has Kunitz assuming the guise of one Solomon Levi. The name combines both wisdom and Kunitz's essential Jewishness. Fatherless and growing up with a thorny mother, the man now makes the desert his home. From the sands he learns the secret of being separate, from the stones the necessity for being hard. Solomon Levi celebrates the "joy of surviving,/on the edge of the road." The theme of both short lyrics is survival of the fatherless in an indifferent world. That Solomon Levi/Stanley Kunitz can dance for the joy of surviving indicates the poet has come out of a dark time into a new period of reconciliation and satisfaction.

If "Solomon Levi" is a glimpse of the poet in his present state of grace, "The Testing-Tree," the title poem, is a flashback to his earlier unhappiness. Stanza I implies the financial plight of the fatherless, as the boy plods past "the Academy ballpark/Where I could never hope to play. . ." Stanza II shows his escape into the imagination. In the third stanza the boy aims at the target-oak in a game which is more than game. If hit once, the tree promises love; twice, the boy should be a poet. Three times and he achieves immortality. As he plays, the boy prays to his father for guidance. In a Note to the poem, Kunitz observes: "A friend of mine tells me that what I have recorded here is recognizable as an ancient ritual, and that the patriarchal sacred oak, as I have described it, is transparently a manifestation of the King of the Wood." The word "patriarchal" is significant.

The poem concludes with a stanza combining dream and intention. Kunitz announces here cognizance of the greater depths to which he has plumbed:

> In a murderous time
> the heart breaks and breaks
> and lives by breaking.
>
> It is necessary to go
> through dark and deeper dark
> and not to turn. . .

Like Theodore Roethke, who discovered that "in a dark time, the eye begins to see," Kunitz has reached new heights by exploring his own depths. In his sixth decade toward heaven, Stanley Kunitz is still willing to hurl stones against his testing-tree. By repeatedly breaking his own heart, he has learned to live by breaking.

—Robert Phillips

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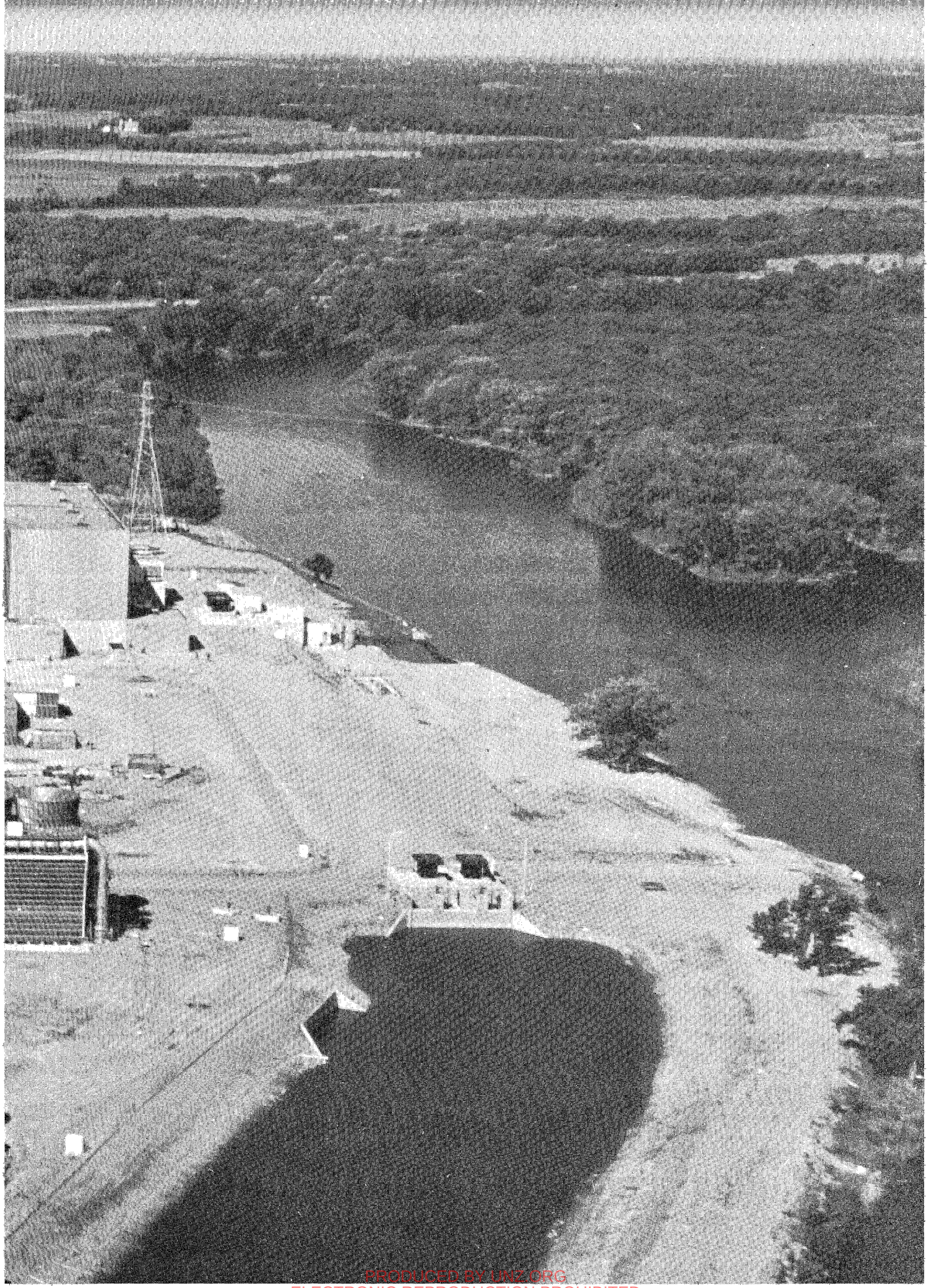

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